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OPERATION COMFORT WARRIORS

As funds donated to The American Legion's Operation Comfort Warriors drive are provided nationwide, some groups are finding unique ways to use the money. The Fort Drum American Red Cross invited the 3-85th Infantry Battalion/Warriors in Transition Unit to a golf outing at the Ives Hill Country Club in Watertown, N.Y., where players received gift bags filled with items purchased with OCW funds. Afterward, players gathered in the clubhouse for dinner, awards, door prizes and more golf on a Wii gaming system, purchased with Operation Comfort Warriors funds for use in physical-therapy sessions. The drive has generated more than $175,000 since December.

Donate online: *www.legion.org*

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Where to go and what to find in The American Legion's electronic media

The Legion's grassroots tradition, now online

Today, young veterans are taking advantage of new and prevailing technologies, self-organizing to support each other during their transition to civilian life. Legionnaires see communities being redefined by the likes of Twitter and Facebook, and we are eager to participate, serving our members with new ways to communicate. Visit The American Legion's social media, join our friends, see our channels, and be a part of the Legion's ongoing story.

BETWEEN THE LINES

Additional material from selected *American Legion Magazine* articles can be found online. Look for extras from the following stories this month:
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Watch a video about the court case that could affect veterans memorials everywhere.
www.legion.org/whatsnew/magazine

56 *Reborn from Katrina's wrath*

Leaders of American Legion Post 77 in Waveland, Miss., talk about the challenge of rebuilding their post home.
www.legion.org/whatsnew/legiontv

66 *Celebration of service*

Miss America 2009 Katie Stam talks about her devotion to veterans and troops in an interview at American Legion National Headquarters in Indianapolis.
www.legion.org/onlineupdate/2712/miss-america-2009-praises-troops-legion

HOT LINKS

Great places to go online.

Convention on the Web

www.legion.org

Were you unable to attend the **91st National Convention** in August? Check out Legion.org for highlights and key speeches from Louisville.

World Series recap

www.legion.org/baseball

Watch highlights from the **2009 American Legion Baseball World Series** in Fargo N.D.

GI Bill updates

www.mygibill.org

The **Post-9/11 GI Bill** took effect in August. Learn more about the changes, and stay up on the latest developments.

Shooting Sports

www.legion.org/whatsnew/legiontv

Watch the finals of the **19th annual Junior Air Rifle 3-Position National Championship** in Colorado Springs, Colo. Sons of The American Legion donated $2,500 in college scholarships for the winners.

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'Safe At Any Speed'

Your article on motorcycle training for active-duty servicemembers is right on (July). I'm a Vietnam War veteran, and I ride with American Legion Riders and Patriot Guard groups. At my last Patriot Guard ride, I met two young Iraq war veterans who were riders. One told me he was stationed at Pearl Harbor and dumped his sport bike doing wheelies; he woke up three months later at the Minneapolis VA. The other was riding a three-wheeler Can-Am with a rack on the back for his wheelchair. His crash had cost him the use of his legs.

All the military services should adopt this training, pronto.

– Guy Wold, Cass Lake, Minn.

"Troops need more than a license to tame today's high-performance bikes." What they need is common sense, and that's something no instructor can give or teach. Any course that teaches motorcycle safety or how to properly operate a cycle at legal speeds I am all for. But at high speed? No.

In a strict sense, the instructors are breaking the law. They know their students are not going to be professional drivers; they will be operating on city streets and highways with posted speed limits. Anyone who goes over these limits is breaking the law, and anyone who helps them is committing an offense.

– Ralph Shartle, Cedar Hill, Texas

'The Never-Ending Battle'

Reading the second part of your series (July), I have a suggestion for VA: hire veterans to handle disability claims. You wouldn't have to worry they won't get the job done.

The American Legion is absolutely right in trying to abolish the work-credit system. It's also up to us to let VA know, by filling out survey sheets at clinics and hospitals, that the veterans it's supposed to serve are unhappy with their comrades' treatment when they file their claims.

So many veterans have been denied when the proof is there in black, white and the blood of the vet. In the old days, you trusted the system. The enlistment papers you signed said your government would take care of you after you served. Did anyone request a copy of the papers we signed? Better yet, was any offered? We trusted the government to take care of our medical needs after we served. We did not let the government down. It's up to the government, then, to care for our comrades in need of medical care for injuries sustained while honorably doing their duty protecting this nation.

The American Legion is our voice. Support it by filling VA's suggestion boxes.

– Larry Bowers, Oil City, Pa.

The first part of "The Never-Ending Battle" series was interesting but lacked some detail. What is the Veterans Benefits Administration's definition of claims backlog as opposed to workload? Can one really assume that a disability claim more than a day old is considered part of the backlog? Is there a standard time period

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For more information on the availability of ZOSTAVAX through the Merck Vaccine Patient Assistance Program, visit ZOSTAVAX.com/freevaccines or call 1-877-9 SHINGLES.

IF YOU HAD CHICKENPOX AS A CHILD, YOU COULD GET SHINGLES NOW.

The chickenpox virus is still in your body.

It can resurface as Shingles, a painful, blistering rash. The Shingles rash usually lasts up to 30 days, and for most the pain lessens as the rash heals. But some people who develop Shingles experience long-term pain that can last for months, even years.

ZOSTAVAX is a vaccine that can help prevent Shingles.

ZOSTAVAX is used to prevent Shingles in adults 60 years of age or older. Once you reach age 60, the sooner you get vaccinated, the better your chances of protecting yourself from Shingles. ZOSTAVAX is given as a single shot. ZOSTAVAX cannot be used to treat Shingles, or the nerve pain that may follow Shingles, once you have it. Talk to your health care professional to see if ZOSTAVAX is right for you.

Important Safety Information

ZOSTAVAX may not fully protect everyone who gets the vaccine. You should not get ZOSTAVAX if you are allergic to any of its ingredients, including gelatin and neomycin, have a weakened immune system, take high doses of steroids, or are pregnant or plan to become pregnant. Possible side effects include redness, pain, itching, swelling, warmth, or bruising at the injection site, as well as headache. You are encouraged to report negative side effects of prescription drugs to the FDA. Visit www.fda.gov/medwatch or call 1-800-FDA-1088. Before getting vaccinated, talk to your health care professional about situations you may need to avoid after getting ZOSTAVAX. Please see the Patient Product Information on the adjacent page.

Before you get Shingles, ask about ZOSTAVAX.

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www.zostavax.com

Patient Information about ZOSTAVAX® (pronounced "ZOS tah vax") Generic name: Zoster Vaccine Live

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You should read this summary of information about ZOSTAVAX[1] before you are vaccinated. If you have any questions about ZOSTAVAX after reading this leaflet, you should ask your health care provider. This information does not take the place of talking about ZOSTAVAX with your doctor, nurse, or other health care provider. Only your health care provider can decide if ZOSTAVAX is right for you.

What is ZOSTAVAX and how does it work?

ZOSTAVAX is a vaccine that is used for adults 60 years of age or older to prevent shingles (also known as zoster).

ZOSTAVAX contains a weakened chickenpox virus (varicella-zoster virus).

ZOSTAVAX works by helping your immune system protect you from getting shingles. If you do get shingles even though you have been vaccinated, ZOSTAVAX may help prevent the nerve pain that can follow shingles in some people.

ZOSTAVAX may not protect everyone who gets the vaccine. ZOSTAVAX cannot be used to treat shingles once you have it.

What do I need to know about shingles and the virus that causes it?

Shingles is caused by the same virus that causes chickenpox. Once you have had chickenpox, the virus can stay in your nervous system for many years. For reasons that are not fully understood, the virus may become active again and give you shingles. Age and problems with the immune system may increase your chances of getting shingles.

Shingles is a rash that is usually on one side of the body. The rash begins as a cluster of small red spots that often blister. The rash can be painful. Shingles rashes usually last up to 30 days and, for most people, the pain associated with the rash lessens as it heals.

Who should not get ZOSTAVAX?

You should not get ZOSTAVAX if you:

- are allergic to any of its ingredients.
- are allergic to gelatin or neomycin.
- have a weakened immune system (for example, an immune deficiency, leukemia, lymphoma, or HIV/AIDS).
- take high doses of steroids by injection or by mouth.
- are pregnant or plan to get pregnant.

You should not get ZOSTAVAX to prevent chickenpox.

Children should not get ZOSTAVAX.

How is ZOSTAVAX given?

ZOSTAVAX is given as a single dose by injection under the skin.

What should I tell my health care provider before I get ZOSTAVAX?

You should tell your health care provider if you:

- have or have had any medical problems.
- take any medicines, including nonprescription medicines, and dietary supplements.
- have any allergies, including allergies to neomycin or gelatin.
- had an allergic reaction to another vaccine.
- are pregnant or plan to become pregnant.
- are breast-feeding.

Tell your health care provider if you expect to be in close contact (including household contact) with newborn infants, someone who may be pregnant and has not had chickenpox or been vaccinated against chickenpox, or someone who has problems with their immune system. Your health care provider can tell you what situations you may need to avoid.

What are the possible side effects of ZOSTAVAX?

The most common side effects that people in the clinical studies reported after receiving the vaccine include:

- redness, pain, itching, swelling, warmth, or bruising where the shot was given.
- headache.

The following additional side effects have been reported in general use with ZOSTAVAX:

- allergic reactions, which may be serious and may include difficulty in breathing or swallowing. If you have an allergic reaction, call your doctor right away.
- fever
- rash
- swollen glands near the injection site (that may last a few days to a few weeks)

Tell your health care provider if you have any new or unusual symptoms after you receive ZOSTAVAX.

What are the ingredients of ZOSTAVAX?

Active Ingredient: a weakened form of the varicella-zoster virus.

Inactive Ingredients: sucrose, hydrolyzed porcine gelatin, sodium chloride, monosodium L-glutamate, sodium phosphate dibasic, potassium phosphate monobasic, potassium chloride.

What else should I know about ZOSTAVAX?

Vaccinees and their health care providers are encouraged to call (800) 986-8999 to report any exposure to ZOSTAVAX during pregnancy.

This leaflet summarizes important information about ZOSTAVAX.

If you would like more information, talk to your health care provider or visit the website at www.ZOSTAVAX.com or call 1-800-622-4477.

Rx only

Issued December 2008

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in which a claim should be adjudicated before it is considered part of the backlog?

Perhaps a better description of what constitutes workload and what constitutes backlog might help bring to light the actual problem facing veterans.

– Donald Modder, Annandale, Va.

These articles really hit home for me. My husband has been fighting for his service-connected disability since he first injured his back while serving his country in Germany. I know death will come before he wins his case. I could write a book on the hell we have endured these 42 years. Good luck to all those who are still fighting.

– Ida Smith, Bedford, Pa.

Many times I've heard it said that a fish "rots from the head down." While most recently that term has been applied to banking and other industries, it certainly is analogous to the VA claims adjudication process – the "head" in this case being the VA regional offices, or VAROs, where claims adjudication and the claims backlog begin.

I learned quickly, as both a claimant and a pro bono veterans advocate, that regional office adjudicators operate in secret and have an arrogant disregard for any facts favorable to the veteran claimant. They operate above the law and enjoy the relative immunity granted them by virtue of the veteran not having the civil right of due process. They are shielded by the ugly myth that the claims process is non-adversarial, and their only challenge comes from national service officers (NSOs) who serve at the pleasure of VA, making for a symbiotic relationship devoid of real advocacy.

There are so many faults with the process, the rot is so pervasive, that the system is beyond fixing. It must be scrapped, heads must roll, and the rule of law must supplant the current system that encourages adjudicators to make their own laws, invent facts, substitute their own judgment in the guise of medical or other expert opinion, and thumb their noses at case law by ignoring the legal mandate of precedent court decisions. I was told by an NSO that adjudicators actually laugh at the court.

The last thing veterans need is another committee or study. The claims backlog has been studied to death, and nothing will change until the rot is excised from whence the backlog begins: VAROs.

– Charles L. Volkema Sr., Deltona, Fla.

'NATO at 60'

Regarding Alan Dowd's article (July), there is no doubt that NATO's containment of the Soviet Union marks NATO as perhaps the most successful military alliance in history. With the fall of the Soviet Union, there was a valid argument that NATO's mission had been accomplished and the alliance should have been dissolved. However, what was originally formed as a collective security alliance with well-defined geographical and political boundaries has turned into a worldwide military force, free to act at the will of its increasing number of members or at the request of the militarily impotent United Nations.

NATO's first action in this newly defined role clearly showed how far the alliance had wandered from its origins. With neither authorization from Congress for U.S. participation nor U.N. approval, NATO assumed the mantra of an offensive force by bombing the sovereign nation of Yugoslavia, which never attacked us or any other NATO country and was never a threat to us.

Further NATO expansion into Eastern Europe and other states far beyond NATO's original sphere commits the United States and our allies to defend places where we have no vital national interests. Are Americans really ready to go to war with Russia over its disagreement with Georgia over South Abkhazia?

– George Jatras, Camp Hill, Pa.

U.S.-Cuba relations

Rep. Laura Richardson, D-Calif., went to Havana and lavishes praise on the communist dictatorship there, and asks for free trade with its corrupt rulers (Big Issues, July). She conveniently omits any mention of inquiries on behalf of Cuba's political prisoners, or its lack of civil liberties or freedom of the press. Nothing like free elections concerned Richardson while she was there, perhaps enjoying free daiquiris at the La Bodeguita del Medio in Havana. Shame on her. We deserve better representatives in our Congress.

– Henry D. Castro Sr., Miami

***THE AMERICAN LEGION MAGAZINE* WELCOMES YOUR OPINIONS**

Include your hometown and a daytime phone number for verification. All letters published are subject to editing.
Due to the volume of mail received, not every letter can be acknowledged.
The American Legion Magazine, P.O. Box 1055, Indianapolis, IN 46206
magazine@legion.org

Today's warriors need us more than ever

By my second day in the war theater of Operation Iraqi Freedom, I realized I was surrounded by reasons why The American Legion matters today as much as ever – maybe more so. These reasons appeared in the form of living, breathing men and women who have voluntarily placed themselves in harm's way under our nation's flag.

That day in Baghdad, as temperatures climbed past 110 degrees, I saw our organization's purpose in the eyes of a twice-deployed Army infantryman who described seeing the life of a close battle buddy extinguished in the flash of a roadside bomb. Working in maintenance as U.S. troops prepared to pull out of Iraq's major cities, the soldier grumbled that he belonged on patrol. His transition to civilian life will not be easy, it occurred to me.

During the same trip, I met with a group of young heroes who had been severely wounded in combat, including some who had lost limbs. They were returning to where they were hit, as part of a special program designed to give them a sense of closure. They, too, wanted to go back to their units. In fact, wherever I traveled this year and met with members of our armed forces – from the Kaiserslautern in Germany to the South Korea-North Korea DMZ and Iraq – the mantra was repeated among this unflinching group. They live to serve, regardless of the risks, dangers, hardships and sacrifices they and their families face every day.

All war eras produce veterans with unique characteristics, but this new generation is truly remarkable. Quite simply, they are duty-driven professionals – brave, patriotic, spirited and capable. I am certain they will become extraordinary Legionnaires.

In the meantime, we Legionnaires are here to serve them. No matter where they are stationed, no matter their mission, we must always be a symbol of home-front support to them, whatever others might say about the war or how numb society becomes to it over the years.

The Family Support Network, Temporary Financial Assistance, Heroes to Hometowns, our service officer corps and our on-post transition program at Walter Reed are just a few examples of how the Legion expresses its support at the national level. Locally, there are countless examples, from care packages to GPS systems sent to combat units.

Last December, The American Legion launched a support program that is both local and national. Operation Comfort Warriors was born after we learned that servicemembers recovering in military hospitals need some comfort items not normally budgeted by DoD. Within months, despite a difficult economy, nearly $175,000 was raised, one check at a time. The American Legion has spent no less than 75 percent of these donations buying and delivering sweat suits, DVDs, puzzles, electronic games, books, calling cards and other items, and not a dime on administrative costs. The remaining funds will be used for their intended purposes: the wounded warriors.

When I was elected national commander, I said that my year would be guided by "pride and purpose." I am truly honored to announce that Operation Comfort Warriors will continue indefinitely, an excellent illustration of what I meant by those words.

David K. Rehbein

National Commander David K. Rehbein

MEMORANDA

AMERICAN LEGION DAY

American Legion posts and departments are urged to request government leaders to officially proclaim Sept. 16 as The American Legion Day. On that date, in 1919, Congress chartered The American Legion. Legionnaires everywhere are encouraged to coordinate community activities to build awareness of the organization. Materials can be obtained by contacting **The American Legion Public Relations Division, P.O. Box 1055, Indianapolis, IN, 46206, (317) 630-1253,** or e-mail **pr@legion.org.**

OPERATION COMFORT WARRIORS

Servicemembers recovering at military hospitals get world-class medical care, but not always do they receive comfort items to help pass the time, such as music players, CDs, DVDs and games. Troops who have lost limbs also appreciate soft sweat suits and other loose clothing to wear during recovery. That's why the Legion launched Operation Comfort Warriors. Send donations to **Operation Comfort Warriors, P.O. Box 1055, Indianapolis, IN 46206.**

Contributions can also be made online. **www.legion.org**

To my dear Granddaughter

Grandma's Pearls of Wisdom Necklace

Sterling silver-plated heart charm inscribed with:
"My Granddaughter, My Joy"

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Comes in a custom-designed keepsake case with the "Grandma's Pearls of Wisdom" poem

To My Granddaughter...

Grandma's Pearls of Wisdom

I've traveled paths you've yet to walk
Learned lessons old and new
And now this wisdom of my life
I'm blessed to share with you

Let kindness spread like sunshine
Embrace those who are sad
Respect their dignity, give them joy
And leave them feeling glad

Forgive those who might hurt you
And though you have your pride
Listen closely to their viewpoint
Try to see the other side

Walk softly when you're angry
Try not to take offense
Invoke your sense of humor
Laughter's power is immense!

Express what you are feeling
Your beliefs you should uphold
Don't shy away from what is right
Be courageous and be bold

Keep hope right in your pocket
It will guide you day by day
Take it out when it is needed
When it's near, you'll find a way

Remember friends and family
Of which you are a precious part
Love deeply and love truly
Give freely from your heart

The world is far from perfect
There's conflict and there's strife
But you still can make a difference
By how you live your life

And so I'm very blessed to know
The wonders you will do
Because you are my granddaughter
And I believe in you

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Shown actual size

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Grandma's Pearls of Wisdom poem by Becky Netherland

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YES. Please reserve the **"Grandma's Pearls of Wisdom Pearl Necklace"** for me as described in this announcement.

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Mrs. Mr. Ms. _____
Name (Please Print Clearly)

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01-07925-001-E94901

Government-run health-care plan

SUPPORT

Rep. Raúl M. Grijalva, D-Ariz.

■ Grijalva is a member of the House Committee on Education and Labor.

OPPOSE

Rep. Devin Nunes, R-Calif.

■ Nunes is a member of the Ways and Means Committee's Subcommittee on Health.

Health care is a basic human right. The debate before us is historic and necessary, as we have an obligation to make our country healthier and ensure that care is affordable and accessible.

I am a long-time supporter of a single-payer approach that would give patients free choice of providers and hospitals, and guarantee comprehensive coverage and equal access for all medically necessary procedures without increasing overall spending. In absence of the opportunity to pass such an approach, I support a strong public option.

A strong public option is a critical component of health-care reform, ensuring affordability and expanding health-care coverage to all. This is critical in addressing all health disparities.

Discussion that a public option will occur after conditions set forth by the private industry is an insult to Americans. A delay in implementing a public option will force undue hardship on those waiting for quality and affordable health care.

Companies were given decades to control costs, improve quality and increase access. They have failed. Private insurance companies would be forced to compete with an affordable, high-quality option. We would expand choice in the health insurance market while allowing families to keep the health-care plans they like. By increasing choice and competition, we'll lower costs for all.

Over the past decade, health-care costs have risen, on average, four times faster than workers' earnings. If we stand idle and do nothing, we are fiscally irresponsible.

As this debate moves forward, I will be watching vigilantly to ensure that the final product contains a strong public option that gives priority to the customer and not the insurance industry.

THE HEART OF THE ISSUE

Advocates of a public health-care option say it would increase competition. Critics say it threatens private health-care plans.

Insurance costs are growing too rapidly, many Americans are without coverage, and access to quality health care is not equal. However, a significant and world-changing difference exists between the reform proposals sought by President Obama and those which I and others are advocating.

Congressional Democrats are moving to create a national health-insurance "connector" – simply put, a national government health insurance agency that will decide what health coverage you receive and lays the foundation for complete government control over medicine.

The connector's mission is to provide every American with health insurance, but its goal will be to enroll every American in a public option. In short, Congress is poised to force the vast majority of Americans into another substandard and unsustainable program while doing nothing to address the long-term insolvency of existing government programs. Indeed, the cost of this plan is expected to exceed $1 trillion.

The Republican alternative, the Patients' Choice Act, would give every American access to private health care. Our plan takes power away from government bureaucrats and insurance executives, and gives that power to you – allowing physicians and their patients to control health care. Our plan does not grow our debt and is fully funded without raising taxes. If you have insurance through your employer, you can keep it. If you need to buy insurance, it will be affordable and accessible – even if you have a pre-existing condition. And if you are low-income, you will get extra assistance that will allow you to exit the current system of "ghetto medicine," with access to the same private market of other Americans.

CONTACT YOUR LEADERS

The Honorable *(name)*, U.S. Senate, Washington, DC 20510 • Phone: (202) 224-3121

The Honorable *(name)*, U.S. House of Representatives, Washington, DC 20515 • Phone: (202) 225-3121

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EATING OUT, THE HEALTHY WAY

The Cleveland Clinic offers some sensible guidelines on what to eat at specific kinds of restaurants:

- At Italian restaurants, avoid sausage, choose red sauces over cream-based sauces, and remember that menu items such as parmigiana, lasagna and carbonara are high in calories and fat.
- At Mexican restaurants, limit the chips and salsa, choose grilled items, beware of high-cheese and deep-fried items, and restrict your guacamole and sour cream intake.
- At pizzerias, thin crust is healthier than thick crust, and veggie toppings are healthier than traditional meat toppings.
- At steakhouses, choose lean cuts of beef such as sirloin, filet, flank or London broil. Opt for smaller cuts of meat, and ask the waiter to keep butter and sour cream on the side.
- At Asian eateries, avoid deep-fried foods, choose steamed rice over fried rice, and request that your food be prepared in chicken or beef stock rather than oil.
- At fast-food restaurants, choose grilled or broiled options, cut back on the cheese, avoid French fries, mix in a salad, and say "no" to super-sizing.

Media Bakery

Veterans and vision

As eyesight losses climb, VA expands services across the country.

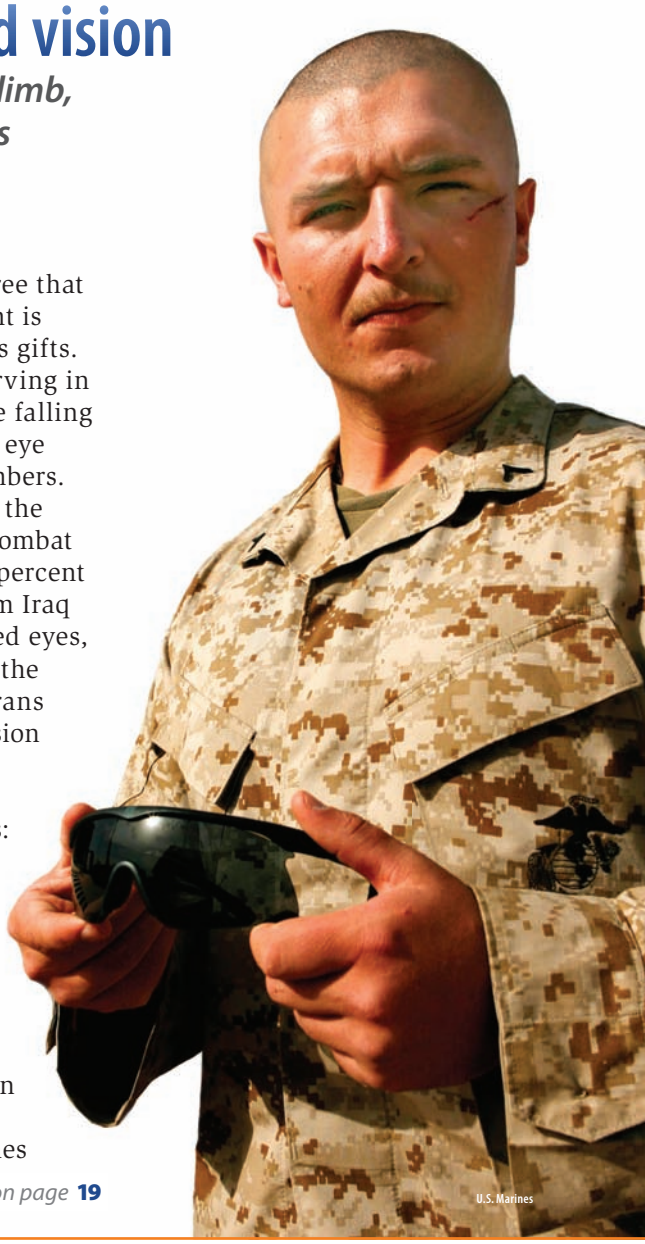
BY THOMAS O'BRIEN

Most people would agree that next to life itself, eyesight is among our most precious gifts. Unfortunately, troops serving in Iraq and Afghanistan are falling victim to combat-related eye injuries in alarming numbers.

Eye injuries are one of the most common types of combat wounds. As many as 16 percent of soldiers returning from Iraq come home with damaged eyes, and that doesn't include the growing number of veterans who have TBI-related vision problems.

Combat eye injuries generally take two forms: direct-blast injury or TBI-related. Direct-blast eye injuries are physically apparent and thus more easily diagnosed and treated. Flying shards of metal, glass, brick and stone can lacerate eyeballs and eyelids, and damage bones

continued on page **19**



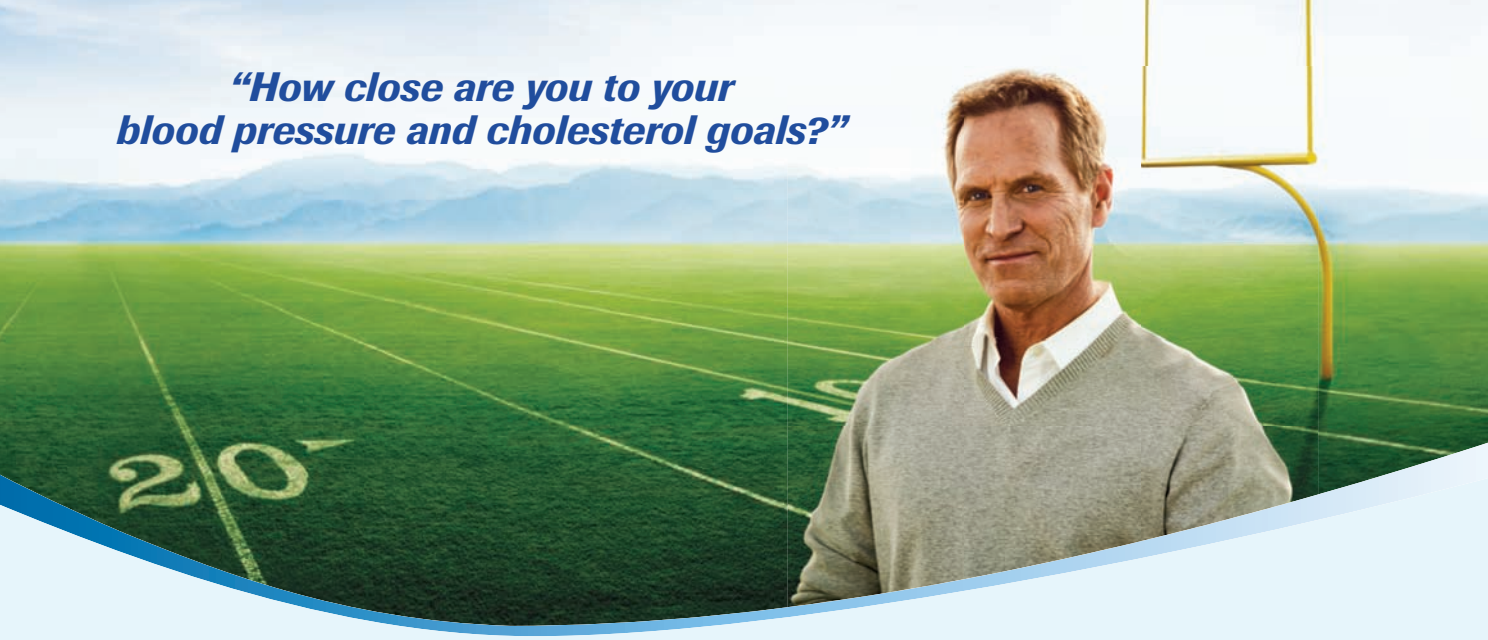
U.S. Marines

THE RIGHT MEDICINE FOR THE JOB

With the cold and flu season approaching, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reminds Americans to choose the right medicines. Since colds, flus, sore throats and bronchitis are caused by viruses, antibiotics won't work, and their misuse can actually be detrimental.

CDC warns that taking antibiotics when they're not needed "increases your risk of getting an infection later that resists antibiotic treatment."

If you are prescribed an antibiotic, follow the doctor's directions and complete the proper course of treatment. If treatment stops too soon, some bacteria may survive and re-infect you, according to CDC, which also urges Americans to discard leftover medication. When prescribed an antibiotic, patients should never skip doses, save any antibiotics for later illnesses or take antibiotics prescribed for someone else. Find out more at **www.cdc.gov**.



Ask your doctor if **Caduet** can help you go for both your goals.

Caduet®
amlodipine besylate/atorvastatin calcium
from 2.5mg/10mg to 10mg/80mg tablets

In a clinical study of patients with slightly elevated blood pressure and cholesterol, **Caduet helped 48% reach both goals in just 4 weeks.** Not all patients will reach their blood pressure and cholesterol goals. Individual results will vary.

Only Caduet combines the two proven medicines, Norvasc (amlodipine besylate) for high blood pressure and Lipitor (atorvastatin calcium) for high cholesterol, in a single pill to significantly lower both, when diet and exercise are not enough.

Ask your doctor if Caduet can help you go for both your goals and visit **www.caduet.com** to learn more.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION:
Caduet is a prescription drug that combines 2 medicines, Norvasc and Lipitor. Norvasc is used to treat high blood pressure (hypertension), chest pain (angina) or blocked arteries of the heart (coronary artery disease); Lipitor is used along with diet and exercise to lower high cholesterol. It is also used to lower the risk of heart attack and stroke in people with multiple risk factors for heart disease such as family history, high blood pressure, age, low HDL-C, or smoking.

Caduet is not for everyone. It is not for those with liver problems. And it is not for women who are nursing, are pregnant, or may become pregnant. If you take Caduet, tell your doctor if you feel any new muscle pain or weakness. This could be a sign of rare but serious muscle side effects. Tell your doctor about all of the medicines you take. This may help avoid serious drug interactions. Your doctor should do blood tests to check your liver function before and during treatment and may adjust your dose. If you have any heart problems, be sure to tell your doctor. The most common side effects are edema, headache, and dizziness. They tend to be mild and often go away.

Caduet can be used alone or with other high blood pressure medicines. Caduet is one of many options for treating high blood pressure and high cholesterol, in addition to diet and exercise, that you or your doctor can consider.

Please see the accompanying patient information on the following page.

You are encouraged to report negative side effects of prescription drugs to the FDA. Visit www.FDA.gov/medwatch or call 1-800-FDA-1088.

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IMPORTANT FACTS

Caduet® (CAD-oo-et)
amlodipine besylate/atorvastatin calcium

LOWERING YOUR HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE AND HIGH CHOLESTEROL

High blood pressure and high cholesterol are more than just numbers. They are risk factors that should not be ignored. If your doctor said you have high blood pressure and high cholesterol, you may be at an increased risk for heart attack or stroke. But the good news is, you can take steps to lower your blood pressure and cholesterol.

With the help of your doctor and a medicine like CADUET, along with diet and exercise, you could be on your way to lowering your blood pressure and cholesterol. Ready to start eating right and exercising more? Talk to your doctor and visit the American Heart Association at www.americanheart.org.

WHO IS CADUET FOR?

Who can take CADUET:

- Adults who need to lower their blood pressure AND who cannot lower their cholesterol enough with diet and exercise

Who should NOT take CADUET:

- Women who are pregnant, may be pregnant, or may become pregnant. CADUET may harm your unborn baby. If you become pregnant, stop CADUET and call your doctor right away.
- Women who are breast-feeding. CADUET can pass into your breast milk and may harm your baby.
- People with liver problems
- People allergic to anything in CADUET

BEFORE YOU START CADUET

Tell your doctor:

- About all the medicines you take, including prescription and nonprescription medicines, vitamins, and herbal supplements
- If you ever had heart disease
- If you have muscle aches or weakness
- If you drink more than 2 glasses of alcohol daily
- If you have diabetes or kidney problems
- If you have thyroid problems

ABOUT CADUET

CADUET is a prescription medicine that combines Norvasc® (amlodipine besylate) for high blood pressure and Lipitor® (atorvastatin calcium) for high cholesterol in one pill. CADUET, along with diet and exercise, treats both high blood pressure (hypertension) and high cholesterol. CADUET can lower the risk of heart attack or stroke in patients with risk factors for heart disease–such as heart disease in the family, high blood pressure, being older than 55, having low HDL-C, diabetes, or smoking.

POSSIBLE SIDE EFFECTS OF CADUET

Serious side effects in a small number of people:

Muscle problems that can lead to kidney problems. This includes kidney failure. You have a higher chance for muscle problems if you take certain other medicines with CADUET.

Liver problems. Your doctor may do blood tests to check your liver before you start CADUET and while you are taking it.

Symptoms of muscle or liver problems include:

- Unexplained muscle weakness or pain, especially if you have a fever or feel very tired
- Nausea, vomiting, or stomach pain
- Brown or dark-colored urine
- Feeling more tired than usual
- Your skin and the whites of your eyes turn yellow

If you have these symptoms, call your doctor right away.

Chest pain. Sometimes chest pain that does not go away or gets worse or a heart attack can happen. If this happens, call your doctor or go to the emergency room right away.

Common side effects of CADUET include:

- headache
- swelling of legs or ankles
- feeling dizzy
- constipation
- gas
- upset stomach and stomach pain

These side effects are usually mild and go away. There are other side effects of CADUET. Ask your doctor or pharmacist for a complete list.

HOW TO TAKE CADUET

Do:

- Take CADUET once a day as prescribed by your doctor.
- Try to eat heart-healthy foods while you take CADUET.
- Take CADUET at any time of day, with or without food.
- If you miss a dose, take it as soon as you remember. But if it has been more than 12 hours since your missed dose, wait. Take the next dose at your regular time.

Don't:

- Do not break CADUET tablets before taking them.
- Do not stop taking nitroglycerin, if you take it for angina.
- Do not change or stop your dose before talking with your doctor.
- Do not start new medicines or stop any medicines you are taking before talking to the doctor.

NEED MORE INFORMATION?

- Ask your doctor, health-care provider, or pharmacist. This is only a summary of the most important information.
- Go to **www.caduet.com** or call **(866) 514-0900.**

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CTIF Rev. 1, 01.08

continued from page **16**

around the eyes. Some protection is provided by "eye armor," if soldiers choose to wear it.

The most difficult form of TBI to detect is the "closed-head" variety, with no obvious physical damage to the skull. The best helmet and body armor are no match for the power of some IEDs. Powerful explosives create a blast wave that jolts the brain one way, followed by another jolt as the pressure returns to normal.

Results can be devastating. An IED blast can affect the neurological pathways related to vision. Symptoms range from double vision and loss of depth perception to slower reading ability and sensitivity to light. In extreme situations, TBI can cause blindness though the eyes remain undamaged.

For its part, VA will make about $40 million available over three years to establish a nationwide rehabilitation system for veterans and active-duty personnel with visual impairments. "What we're putting into place here is a nationwide vision-rehab system that will ensure that veterans with vision impairment get the appropriate care and devices when the care is needed, and in a setting that is convenient to the patient," says Stan Poel, formerly VA's director of blind rehabilitation.

The flagship program is a 34-bed residential facility located in the Central Blind Rehabilitation Center at Edward Hines Jr. VA Medical Center, west of Chicago. Program chief Jerry Schutter says Hines has the only program to screen every OEF/OIF veteran for functional vision deficits. More than 65 percent of 200 OEF/OIF veterans screened were found to have some functional visual problems, most likely related to TBI.

Hines leads the country in training blind veterans to use handheld GPS units. These systems give audible cues about directions and real-time updates on progress to destinations. They contain software to locate schools, ATMs, stores, restaurants and other destinations. So far, Hines has trained more than 60 veterans to use the units. "We can teach you to do anything you did before, except drive a car," Schutter says.

Thomas O'Brien is a Chicago-area writer.

Veterans Health Administration, Blind Rehabilitation Service

810 Vermont Ave. N.W.
Washington, DC 20420

(202) 273-8483

www1.va.gov/blindrehab/

Media Bakery

Living Well is designed to provide general information. It is not intended to be, nor is it, medical advice. Readers should consult their physicians when they have health problems.

THE MIGRAINE MENACE

Exercise regularly, get plenty of sleep, drink water rather than soft drinks, coffee or tea, and reduce stress and anxiety – following these guidelines minimizes the chances of a migraine attack for most people.

In the long term, sufferers should seek the advice of their physicians; there is no single way to treat a migraine. The condition is unique to each patient and appropriate treatments vary.

Make an effort to isolate migraine triggers. Most doctors advise a patient to keep a diary, listing the environment, food eaten and activities in the hours before an attack. This information can help a patient manage the disorder in an effort to reduce frequency.

Alternative therapies such as yoga, meditation and acupuncture have reportedly achieved some success with migraine sufferers. However, these claims have not yet been confirmed by medical research.

Dr. Steven Herzog, a neurologist and migraine expert at the Baylor University Medical Center at Dallas, says better treatment is ahead. "Presently, we manage this disorder in an effort to reduce the frequency and the severity of events," he says. "But as we learn more about the genetics of migraine and develop more sophisticated medications, we will improve our treatment of this disorder and a cure may be a possibility."

Media Bakery

THE GEOGRAPHY OF SNEEZING

Life can be more difficult for allergy sufferers living in certain U.S. cities, according to the Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America (AAFA). The advocacy organization annually evaluates 100 metro areas to identify the country's top allergy capitals. Ranking is based on average recorded pollen levels (grass, weed and tree pollen, and mold spores), sales of prescription and over-the-counter allergy medications, and the number of board-certified allergists. This year, Louisville, Ky., tops the list. If you live in one of these challenging metro areas, don't despair. According to AAFA, your best defense is to know your allergy triggers and take steps to avoid them.

WORST METRO AREAS FOR ALLERGY SUFFERERS

RANK	METROPOLITAN AREAS
1	Louisville, Ky.
2	Knoxville, Tenn.
3	Charlotte, N.C.
4	Madison, Wis.
5	Wichita, Kan.
6	McAllen, Texas
7	Greensboro, N.C.
8	Dayton, Ohio
9	Little Rock, Ark.
10	Augusta, Ga.

Source: Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America

Media Bakery

VA programs care for the caregiver

BY DR. JOEL KUPERSMITH

More than 44 million Americans provide unpaid care to another adult, usually a family member, according to a 2004 study by AARP and the National Alliance for Caregiving.

The emotional and physical burden on these caregivers can be draining, to say the least. The title of the popular book "The 36-Hour Day" reflects the unique challenges of this role.

VA has a number of programs to aid family caregivers; many involve direct or indirect financial support. VA also has been piloting additional avenues of help, such as respite care, case management, education and home-safety evaluations. Study results will be analyzed starting this year to determine which programs should be implemented. Research plays a key role in guiding VA policy in this area and in identifying new ways to assist caregivers. Aside from the pilot programs already mentioned, other efforts currently under way include:

- Resources for Enhancing Alzheimer's Caregiver Health (REACH) is being tested in 20 cities. The program provides education, support and skills-building to help caregivers manage difficult patient behaviors and their own stress.
- Researchers at the Bedford, Mass., VA Medical Center and Boston University are studying the best way to improve Alzheimer's home safety. They've learned that existing guidelines for caregivers often don't provide enough detail, and that caregivers are unlikely to make changes that are too costly, time-consuming or technically difficult.
- A team in Minneapolis is surveying caregivers of veterans with traumatic brain injury. The goal is to assess the physical, emotional and financial burden on caregivers and learn what further resources they need.
- A group at the Gainesville, Fla., VA is developing Web-based education for caregivers of stroke patients, using studies of what types of information work best.

These and other efforts will help VA empower and support caregivers. Working as partners, we can ensure that veterans attain the highest quality of life possible.

Dr. Joel Kupersmith is chief research and development officer for the Veterans Health Administration.

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*Based on 2005 United HealthCare Insurance Company Enrollment Data.

***Government Accountability Office (GAO); Report GAO-04-960, "Medicare Demonstration PPO's Financial and other Advantages for Plans, Few Advantages for Beneficiaries." Washington, DC, September 2004.

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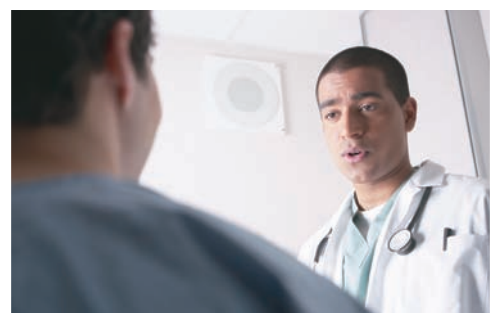
AS535 C(8/06)

Group 8 veterans invited back to VA

BY TOM PHILPOTT

The VA health-care system has lifted its six-year ban on new enrollments of Priority Group 8 veterans. This decision qualifies about 266,000 more veterans – middle-income without service-connected health conditions – for entry into the system. The first 3,900 of these veterans were notified June 15 by mail that recent enrollment applications had been approved, said Philip Matkovsky, a senior official at the Veterans Health Administration.



VA online calculator:
www.va.gov/healtheligibility/apps/enrollmentcalculator/

Group 8 veterans using VA health care pay $15 per outpatient visit and slightly more for specialty care. Inpatient fees are a bit more complicated but also modest. A popular feature is that prescription drugs are discounted, usually $8 for a 30-day supply.

VHA is sending letters and application forms to 420,000 veterans rejected for enrollment since Jan. 18, 2003, when the Bush administration imposed a ban on new Group 8 enrollments. The letters will encourage them to re-apply.

The Bush administration had feared that a wartime VA health-care system couldn't accept more Group 8 patients without affecting access to care for higher-priority veterans – those who are poor or have service-related disabilities.

On an initiative from Rep. Chet Edwards, D-Texas, Congress added $350 million to the VA budget for fiscal 2009 and ordered the department to create, in effect, a new sub-category of Group 8 veterans: those with incomes "10 percent or less" above the income ceilings for Group 8 veterans.

The VA health-care system is now open to Group 8 veterans with 2008 incomes below a new national means test threshold of $32,342 (without dependents) and $38,812 for one dependent. The ceiling is $45,478 for four dependents and climbs by $2,222 for each additional dependent.

Group 8 veterans also can enroll if incomes fall below a geographic means test threshold for more costly areas of the country. For example, a veteran in San Francisco making less than $69,685 in 2008 (with no dependents) could still qualify for VA care. The same veteran, but with four dependents, could have earned up to $107,470 and still enroll. For Washington, D.C., new income ceilings are $47,335 for vets with no dependents, $54,120 with one dependent and $73,040 for four dependents.

"You can see how these geographic thresholds adjust for the specific set of circumstances, depending on where veterans live," Matkovsky said. A veteran can use the online calculator at VA's Web site to determine if last year's income was low enough to qualify for care.

Veterans need not rush to apply for enrollment, because no one with qualifying income levels will be turned away. The 266,000 vets expected to gain access is merely an estimate and does not represent any sort of cap on new Group 8 enrollees.

For convenience, veterans who applied for enrollment on or after Jan. 1 this year – and were rejected – will not have to re-apply. VA will reconsider their applications automatically and enroll them if they qualify. Those denied enrollment before Jan. 1 will have to re-apply because VA needs to see their full incomes for 2008.

Once veterans are enrolled in VA health care, no further income checks occur. They will not lose access to care if their annual incomes rise.

The Obama administration plans to continue to raise income thresholds for Group 8 veterans, in increments of 5 or 10 percent through 2013, enough to allow 284,000 more of these veterans into the system. But VA officials have promised to monitor closely any adverse impact on access to care for higher-priority veterans. The potential pool of Group 8 veterans could total 22 million.

"The thing we don't want to do is open it up in a way that compromises our ability to provide timely care and quality care," Matkovsky said.

More information on Group 8 enrollment is available online at **www.va.gov/healtheligibility** or by calling **(877) 222-VETS (8387).**

Tom Philpott, a former Coast Guardsman, has written about veterans and military personnel issues for more than 30 years.

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Unlike other heating sources, the EdenPURE® cannot put poisonous carbon monoxide, any type of fumes or any type of harmful radiation into a room.

Q. What is the origin of this amazing heating element in the EdenPURE®?

A. This advanced heating element was discovered accidentally by a man named John Jones.

Q. What advantages does this advanced infrared heating process have over other heating source products?

A. This infrared heating process was designed around the three most important consumer benefits: economy, comfort, and safety.

In the EdenPURE® process, electricity is used to generate a type of infrared heat which, in turn, creates a very safe heat.

Q. How can a person cut their heating bill by up to 50% with the EdenPURE®?

A. The EdenPURE® will heat a room in minutes. Therefore, you can turn the heat down in your house to as low as 50 degrees, but the room you are occupying, which has the EdenPURE®, will be warm and comfortable. The EdenPURE® is portable. When you move to another room, it will quickly heat that room also. This can drastically cut heating bills, in some instances, by up to 50%.

End of interview.

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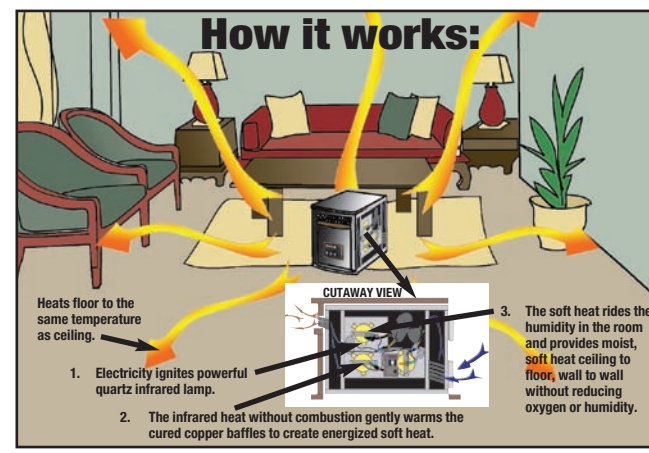

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FORGOTTEN FRONTS

America's battle against terrorism depends on what happens in Pakistan, India and other nations.

BY ALAN W. DOWD

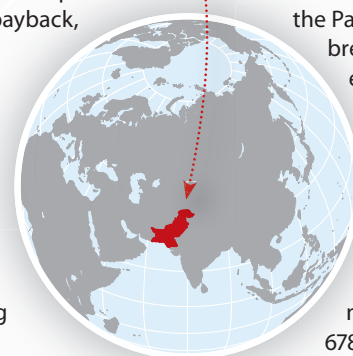
Some in Washington may no longer call it a "war," but whatever it is that 9/11 unleashed – global guerrilla war, worldwide police action or a war on terrorism – it has many fronts.

For the better part of a decade, Americans have been focused on just two of those fronts: Afghanistan and Iraq. Yet what some call a "generational struggle" against terrorists and their patrons rages in many places, sometimes-forgotten fronts that are vital to America's long-term success.

Pakistani soldiers take position outside a police training center during a March 30 gun battle with terrorists on the outskirts of Lahore, Pakistan. Corbis

PAKISTAN

Pakistan may not be a forgotten front, but for 15 years it has been a neglected one. It pays to recall that Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence agency (ISI) effectively spawned the Taliban in 1994-1995, in a shortsighted attempt to stabilize Afghanistan. Call it blowback or payback, but Taliban tribesmen and their al-Qaeda allies are destabilizing Pakistan today.



Since 2001, they have assassinated a former prime minister, killed thousands of Pakistanis, and carried out too many attacks to count: an assault on cricket players from Sri Lanka, an attack on the police academy in Lahore, destruction of NATO equipment and transport trucks, murders of moderate officials, the torching of 180 girls schools and a bombing at the Islamabad Marriott.

As President Obama concluded, "Al-Qaeda and its extremist allies are a cancer that risks killing Pakistan from within."

In fact, the State Department noted in 2008 that al-Qaeda "has reconstituted some of its pre-9/11 operational capabilities" in Pakistan. Osama bin Laden's likely address is somewhere in Pakistan's ungoverned Taliban territories.

Hence, the so-called "drone war" (missile attacks by U.S. unmanned aerial vehicles against targets inside Pakistan) that began with the Bush administration continues under the Obama administration. "It's the only game in town in terms of confronting or trying to disrupt the al-Qaeda leadership," CIA Director Leon Panetta said.

As the Taliban and al-Qaeda destabilize Pakistan, they also undermine the U.S.-led NATO mission in Afghanistan.

According to the *International Herald Tribune*, ISI's "S Wing" is helping coordinate Taliban operations in southern Afghanistan.

The Taliban and al-Qaeda are also wreaking havoc with NATO supplies inbound from Pakistan. Almost 80 percent of NATO's equipment in Afghanistan is carried from Karachi to holding terminals in Peshawar, then into landlocked Afghanistan through the Khyber Pass. This logistics gauntlet has come under attack dozens of times in the past year.

The cancer that scars Afghanistan and Pakistan today is largely a result of Pakistan's inability to secure its laughably misnamed Federally Administered Tribal Areas. In fact, when the Pakistani military isn't steering clear of these breeding grounds for terrorists, it is losing engagements against them or cutting deals.

- In 2007, 248 Pakistani soldiers surrendered in Waziristan without a fight.
- Half the policemen in Pakistan's Swat district have quit in recent months.
- Between 2001 and 2007, more than 1,000 Pakistani troops were killed in battle. (By way of comparison, about the same number of NATO troops, including 678 Americans, were killed in Afghanistan between October 2001 and May 2009.)
- The Pakistani government is ceding vast stretches of territory to the Taliban and, in the process, feeding the very monster that is devouring what remains of a secular, democratic, nuclear-armed Pakistan. In fact, a study by *The Long War Journal* concludes that 23 of Pakistan's provinces are contested or under Taliban control. "You can't deal with these people by giving away territory," U.S. envoy Richard Holbrooke warns.

In May, Taliban forces got to within 60 miles of Islamabad, triggering the government's bloody Swat offensive and awakening Pakistanis to what Gen. David Petraeus calls a battle for "the very existence of the Pakistani state." This summer, a full-scale military offensive was launched against Taliban and al-Qaeda strongholds in Waziristan.

Yet Islamabad spurns offers for direct international intervention, invoking its sovereign borders in one breath before claiming it is too weak to control its territory in the next. We are left with two unsettling prospects: either Pakistan's intelligence and military assets are beyond government control, or the government is complicit in what its intelligence operatives do and what its military won't do.

Regardless of causes for Islamabad's failures, the results are the same: Pakistan has become an incubator of terror.

INDIA

India knows this all too well. To borrow from Cold War parlance, India is a frontline state in the war on terror.

Even as the Taliban sets Pakistan ablaze, elements of ISI are reported to have provided support to Lashkar-e-Taiba, the terrorist group involved in the Mumbai siege that killed 183 people. ISI's fingerprints are also on the attack against India's embassy in Kabul, which killed 54 people in 2008.

Beyond the Kabul and Mumbai attacks, terrorists bombed markets in Jaipur and New Delhi, industrial facilities in Bangalore and buses in Ahmedabad in 2008. In fact, scores of Indian civilians were killed by what the State Department calls "South Asian Islamic extremist groups" and indigenous terrorist groups last year.

Sadly, 2008 wasn't an anomaly. The State Department reports that terrorists of all stripes killed 2,300 people in India in 2007. A year earlier, jihadist groups attacked commuter trains in Mumbai, killing some 200 people; in 2003, they targeted a hotel in Delhi; and in 2001, they attacked the Indian parliament.

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By Shawn Oyler

UMS - Imagine finally getting something that will never lose its value.

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These free Armored Safes are being turned over to the general public who make it in time to beat the order deadline for their share of the hoard of brilliant, never-circulated U.S. Gov't coins and currency before the 7 day shutoff.

"The frantic demand for U.S. Gov't coins has caused the U.S. Mint® to officially halt the sale of many of its most valuable coins," said lead consultant for the World Reserve Thomas C. Harris, Retired Deputy Director of the U.S. Treasury Bureau of Engraving and Printing.

"Today, the World Reserve began to release this hoard of U.S. Gov't coins and currency in a free Armored Safe to the general public. Having valuable U.S. Gov't coins serves as an economic life raft. This valuable Collection will never, never, never lose its face value. You will always have something worth a lot of money," said Harris.

Here's the best part, among the U.S. Gov't issued coins and currency that everyone gets is the highly sought after American Eagle 1-ounce silver bullion coin made from solid .999 fine silver, 250 of the first liberty engraved Westward Journey Nickels, a banker's stack of historic $2 bills and a full vault tube of the Presidential Golden Dollar Coins.

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If times ever get really tough any coin in the hoard could be used to buy anything. But unless it is a good reason, only a fool would do that because this personal hoard of money is already worth so much more in collector value.

"So many people are buying up these coins. Even for those people who give away some of their collection as gifts, they are keeping the Armored Safe for themselves," said Robert Anthony, Director of the private World Reserve Monetary Exchange.

"This Safe is one of the absolute best places to keep valuables and important papers. People will now have a safe place to store their wills, guns, jewelry, antiques, keys, coins and even cash," Anthony said.

"The only problem the Safe creates is when it's time to read your Will. You need to make sure everyone knows who you want to leave it to," he said.

"When Americans get their hands on this Safe and their very own personal hoard of U.S. Gov't Coins, they'll really do a double take. Everyone will feel like they just won the lottery," he said. ■

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How to get the free Armored Safes

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Eligibility: Certain restrictions apply: Open to the public only, sorry no dealers. Those who miss the 7 day deadline will be turned away from this free offer and required to wait for future announcements, in this or other publications. The entire World Reserve Collection must be obtained to get the safe free. For more information about the larger Grand Presidential Armored Safes please call.

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■ **NO MORE WORRIES:** Carolyn Ford of Perry Town, OH thought she hit the jackpot when her free Grand Presidential Safe was delivered. "I already have some old coins, but I wanted this whole hoard of U.S. coins as a nice nest egg. I'll also set aside some of my hoard for my Grandchildren. Now I don't have to worry where to keep my important papers and my Grandfather's gun since I have my new safe," she said.

7 Smart places to stash your cash

By Robert Anthony

So you're still hiding money under the mattress or in the bread box?

Well, you're not alone. Ever since financial institutions have been dropping like flies, millions of Americans have stopped relying solely on their banks.

1. Be sure your bank is insured. If you're not sure if your bank is FDIC insured find out or get your money out. They only have enough cash on hand to cover about 2% of nationwide deposits. So it's not always wise to keep all your eggs in one basket.

2. Start and grow a coin collection. Coin collections are tangible assets that will always keep their face value, instead of just owning stocks that could depreciate or lose you money.

3. Keep cash safe at home. Cash is King. Believe it, but remember not to keep it in a thief's favorite spot; like in the bread box or the mattress. These will never have the protection that a quality home safe can provide.

4. Savings Bonds, an old favorite. Savings Bonds are an easy way for your money to stay safe in the future. However, if lost or stolen they could be difficult to replace unless the serial number was kept in a safe place.

5. Gold and silver still shine. If you own gold or silver, great, hold on to it. But if you don't, one of your best bets is to try to get as many U.S. Gov't issued gold and silver coins as you can.

6. Hold on to real estate. With interest rates at historic all-time lows the market is sure to recover and property values will once again bounce back. So those who hold on to their homes for the long term will likely reap the benefits of these investments.

7. Buy a good safe. Home safes become an absolute necessity during economic turmoil. But, because of the huge spike in recent sales, safes may be hard to come by.

With all this you'll be much safer, just in case your bank is the next to fail. ■

CENTRAL ASIA

Before leaving the neighborhood, we should take stock of the various "Stans." Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Kyrgyzstan have grown increasingly critical to the war effort in Afghanistan, a fact underscored by Kyrgyzstan's surprising threat to boot the United States from Manas Air Base, which serves a key hub for operations in the Afghan theater.

The Stans remind us that the war on terror, like the Cold War, has many dimensions, including diplomatic, economic and geopolitical. Uzbekistan, for instance, abruptly ended a base-leasing deal in 2005 due to U.S. criticism of the country's human-rights violations. In Kyrgyzstan, Moscow is pulling strings to send a message to Washington about missile defense and NATO expansion – issues that have nothing to do with the fight against global terrorism. The Kyrgyz government seems to be shopping for the best deal.

Even though Kyrgyzstan has reversed itself and approved America's continued use of Manas Air Base, the episode spurred the United States to develop backup plans to carry equipment by rail and/or air into Afghanistan via Russia, Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan; to use overland routes through Tajikistan; and/or to transport equipment through Turkmenistan. As *The Times* of London reports, the latter option would bring in supplies by ship across the Black Sea to Georgia, then by truck to Azerbaijan, then by ship across the Caspian Sea to Turkmenistan, then into Afghanistan.

Amid all the political intrigue and logistical gymnastics, the good news about Central Asia is that the Stans largely are eager to assist the United States and NATO. Plus, most have summoned the will to combat the jihadist threat, even if they lack the resources.

SOMALIA

This nation, sitting on the strategic Horn of Africa, first caught the attention of most Americans in 1992, when President George H.W. Bush dispatched 28,000 troops to end a man-made famine. The mercy mission began to unravel in October 1993, when 18 Americans were killed in an ambush and ensuing gun battle in Mogadishu. We didn't learn until later that bin Laden's network had provided training to the Somali militiamen.

Fast forward 16 years, and Somalia is still a frontline terror state; at times, it has even been under the nominal control of a movement aligned with al-Qaeda.

However, the United States and regional allies such as Ethiopia have partnered to blunt the Islamist advance in Somalia. In fact, in 2007, U.S. warplanes targeted the chief planner of al-Qaeda's 1998 embassy bombings in southern Somalia. That same year, the Navy struck terrorist bases along the country's coast.

Today, much of the pirate plague is emanating from Somalia. STRATFOR, an intelligence clearinghouse, notes that "there

YEMEN

Yemeni groups linked to al-Qaeda have been very active of late, launching a deadly attack on the U.S. embassy last September and orchestrating prison breaks of high-level terrorists. As in Pakistan, the Yemeni government is making the enemy's job easier, having released 170 men with al-Qaeda links in early 2009.

Director of National Intelligence Dennis Blair reports that Yemen "is re-emerging as a jihadist battleground and potential regional base of operations for al-Qaeda to plan internal and external attacks, train terrorists and facilitate the movement of operatives."

Note his use of the word "re-emerging." Some forget that the United States has been attacked in Yemen (the 2000 bombing of the USS *Cole*) and has hit back (the 2002 missile strike by a Predator drone).

may be some limited business transactions" between al-Qaeda and the pirates but adds that "the clan politics of Somalia simply do not allow for broader strategic cooperation."

Of course, the two problems can be traced to the same source: anarchy in Somalia. To bolster the fragile Somali government, the Obama administration began shipping weapons and ammunition in 2009. Washington also is supporting efforts by Somalia's neighbors to train the Somali army.

The chaotic state that reigns in much of Africa is one reason the United States created an Africa Command in 2008. The U.S. military has expanded its base in Djibouti, where some 2,000 U.S. troops have been deployed since 2003, conducting humanitarian, training and military operations in support of the wider struggle against terrorism.

In fact, U.S. special-operations units have been at work in Africa throughout the post-9/11 period. As *The Washington Post* has reported, the Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Initiative provides training, equipment and intelligence to militaries in Algeria, Chad, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Senegal, Nigeria, Morocco and Tunisia. *Jane's Defense* reported that elements of the 3rd Special Forces Group were in Mali in 2007.

LIBYA

In 2003, Libya's Moammar Gadhafi renounced terror as a tool of his regime. His government accepted responsibility for the 1988 bombing of Pan Am Flight 103 and agreed to pay compensation to the families of those killed.

Equally important, in an act of pre-emptive surrender, Gadhafi gave up his entire WMD program, including tons of mustard gas, nerve gas and nuclear material.

"Was it pure coincidence," Johns Hopkins scholar Fouad Ajami observed, "that only days after Saddam's capture, the Libyan strongman ... threw his country wide open to international inspectors and owned up to an extensive program for the development of chemical and biological weapons?"

Libya's WMD program is now entirely dismantled, much of it shipped to Tennessee and destroyed.

In a sign of how much this North African nation has changed, the United States lifted its designation of Libya as a state sponsor of terrorism in 2006, and upgraded its offices in Tripoli to embassy status. Ayman al-Zawahiri, al-Qaeda's second in command, has even labeled Gadhafi an "enemy of Islam."

THE PHILIPPINES

Small detachments of U.S. forces began arriving in the Philippines in early 2002, to train and assist the Philippine army in its fight against terrorist groups Abu Sayyaf and Jemaah Islamiyah. A U.S. joint special-operations task force continues to partner with Philippine forces. The result has been one of the more successful battles in the war on terror.

More than 100 Abu Sayyaf terrorists were killed in 2007, including the group's leader; dozens more have been captured. According to the State Department, the United States and the Philippines created joint intelligence fusion centers in 2007 and 2008, and a coast-watch program to monitor and disrupt terror cells. U.S. military, intelligence and reconnaissance elements have supported Philippine forces in operations in the southern Philippines, and the Department of Justice has helped train 5,000 police. The Department of Homeland Security has developed a "biometric initiative" to assist the Philippine National Police in hunting down suspected terrorists.

Some observers point to the Philippines as a model of how to fight modern terrorism. "Counter-insurgency is counter-intuitive," as Zachary Abuza of Simmons College explained in a recent interview with HDNet. "You gotta go in with less to do more," he said, arguing that U.S. efforts in the Philippines have been successful because "the footprint has been very small."

Alan W. Dowd is a senior fellow with the Fraser Institute.
www.fraseramerica.org

Monumental Challenge

The Supreme Court's decision on the Mojave Desert cross may set a precedent for veterans memorials everywhere.

BY STEVE BROOKS

The two-lane highway cuts through a Mojave Desert landscape of cacti, Joshua trees and fire ants. Over a span of 76 minutes, exactly six cars pass by. Visitors are well-advised to turn off their cell phones to conserve battery power. There is no "Now Network." No "Your World Delivered." Other than an occasional blast of warm wind or the intermittent buzz of flying insects, the air is still and quiet.

Remote as it is, this particular area of southern California stands squarely at the center of a judicial firestorm over the constitutionality of allegedly religious symbols in public places. The Supreme Court will hear the case on Oct. 7; its ruling is expected to deliver a long-awaited precedent that could dictate faith's place on government-owned land and affect the future of many public war and veterans memorials, such as the Mojave Desert cross that honors World War I veterans. The American Legion adamantly opposes

1934
World War I veterans erect a cross and plaque at Sunrise Rock in the Mojave Desert to remember fallen troops.

1999
National Park Service denies a request to erect a Buddhist statue near the cross and indicates it intends to remove the cross.

2001
Congress prohibits the National Park Service from spending federal funds to remove the cross. Frank Buono, a former NPS employee, files suit claiming an establishment-clause violation.

2002
Congress designates the cross and surrounding property as a national memorial for World War I veterans. Congress also agrees to give Veterans of Foreign Wars one acre of property where the cross is located, in exchange for five acres of privately owned land. The U.S. District Court for the Central District of California rules the cross unconstitutional and orders its removal. Congress authorizes NPS to transfer the land surrounding the cross to the VFW.

LEFT: *Attorney Hiram Sasser stands behind the boxed-up Mojave Desert cross. Its fate, to be decided Oct. 7 by the Supreme Court, may affect all U.S. memorials with religious symbols.* Sandy Huffaker Jr.

the removal of religious symbols or expressions – be they crosses, angels, Stars of David, engraved, written or recited references to God, or other manifestations – from public view.

An American Civil Liberties Union establishment-clause lawsuit has forced the federal government to conceal the Mojave Desert memorial inside a wooden box until the case is cleared up. When it hears *Salazar v. Buono* on Oct. 7, the Supreme Court will decide whether the box comes off or if the cross comes down. The decision will likely shape similar cases currently in the judicial system, and those looming ahead.

But for now, the cross of the Mojave Desert Veterans Memorial – originally erected in 1934 to honor World War I veterans – remains shielded from view, in order to keep it from offending anyone who drives past. Many who travel the narrow highway don't even realize the cross exists.

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"You would have to go extremely out of your way to be offended by this memorial," says Hiram Sasser, director of litigation for the Liberty Legal Institute in Dallas. "The only people who ever see this veterans memorial on a regular basis are Marines from the Twentynine Palms base going to Las Vegas for the weekend. I doubt they are offended by it, if they even see it as they drive by. The only person I could imagine who would be offended by this memorial is someone seeking out offense for the purpose of establishing a case.

"If a veterans memorial in the shape of a cross out here in the middle of nowhere establishes religion ... that's just crazy. I guess it establishes a religion for the rattlesnakes and coyotes."

The Liberty Legal Institute – a not-for-profit law firm founded in 1997 to protect religious freedoms and First Amendment rights for individuals, groups and churches – has teamed up with The American Legion, Veterans of Foreign Wars and other veterans service organizations to take on the ACLU, which has also fought the Boy Scouts in San Diego's Balboa Park and the Legion over a veterans memorial that includes a cross at Mount Soledad, Calif. "World War I memorials throughout the world – whether it's New Zealand, the Czech Republic, England, the United States – have traditionally been in the shape of a cross," Sasser says. "That's how World War I veterans were remembered and honored. And so I think that all of these memorials deserve protection. We should not throw away the symbolism of the sacrifice and the courage of our World War I veterans simply because some people don't like the symbol."

"The Dead of All Wars." The Mojave Desert cross was erected by a group of World War I veterans who moved to the desert for its isolation and warm, dry climate. The memorial was built to honor "the dead of all wars" and for 50 years was the responsibility of John Riley Bembrey, a World War I Army medic who later became a prospector. He proclaimed himself a non-religious man, viewing his dedication and care for the cross as a duty to his friends who made the ultimate sacrifice in battle. Before Bembrey died in 1984, he convinced his longtime friend, Henry Sandoz, to take over the responsibility.

"He asked somebody to maintain the cross and re-erect it – it had got knocked down – so he didn't ask me directly to do it," Sandoz said. "But I knew

2004
The Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals agrees with the district court that the cross must be removed.

2005
The district court enforces a permanent injunction against the cross.

2007
The Ninth Circuit rules that Congress cannot cure an establishment-clause violation by transferring land.

2008
The Ninth Circuit refuses to hear the case again. Liberty Legal Institute files an amicus brief on behalf of The American Legion and others, asking the Supreme Court to hear the case.

2009

The Supreme Court agrees to hear the case Oct. 7. The cross remains hidden from public view, encased inside a plywood box.

Henry Sandoz, caretaker of the Mojave cross, holds a photo of his late friend World War I veteran John Riley Bembrey. Sandy Huffaker Jr.

that he was hinting that I would take it upon myself to do that, and that's what I have done. We really had a good friendship. So I've been maintaining that cross ever since. He was a veteran of World War I, and I just thought it was a good thing to do for veterans – in honor of the veterans, I guess I should say."

In 1986, the cross was vandalized, so Sandoz installed a metal-pipe version similar to the original. He bolted it down to Sunrise Rock and filled the pipe with concrete, making it nearly impossible to remove. In fact, Sandoz did such a good job building the replacement cross that Mojave Desert Preserve officials had to ask him directly for a way to tear it out, after the U.S. Ninth Circuit Court ruled it had to be removed.

Sandoz did not oblige.

"I told her, 'No, I put it up to stay,'" says Sandoz, 70. "In fact, I didn't even say 'No.' I said, 'Hell no.'"

Alongside Wanda, his wife of 49 years, Sandoz tries to stay calm when discussing the cross. The couple sits shaded from the late-morning heat on their patio in Yucca Valley, Calif. Wanda describes her anger at the decision to cover the memorial cross.

"For so many years, we'd drive up and see the cross," Wanda says. "Now you drive up, and the box is just like a slap in the face. It's just very offensive to see that box. For 14 years, I drove the school bus by there several times a day, and I would always look for it. I knew the exact spot on the road where I could see it, and it just, I don't know, gave me a sense of peace to see it there, knowing what it was there for. It would always remind me to be thankful for our veterans and what they did for our country."

The couple offered to donate five acres of land they own within the Mojave Desert to the federal government, in exchange for the acre of land that includes the cross; the couple would give that land to nearby VFW Post 385. An act of Congress instructed the Department of the Interior to conduct the trade. The district court and the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals, however, ruled the land transfer didn't erase the alleged establishment-clause violation and prohibited it from occurring.

Sasser said that attempt didn't placate Frank Buono, a former National Park Service employee who found the cross objectionable on public land, nor did it satisfy the ACLU. "Frank Buono is only offended that it is a religious symbol on government land," Sasser says. "He has articulated that he's Catholic, and that he's not offended by seeing the cross. He just doesn't think it should be on government land. So why in the world is he allowed to challenge the land transfer to the VFW if the memorial will be in private hands? Why should he care about that?

"(The ACLU is) committed to making sure (the cross) comes down. That's all they care about."

Not so, the ACLU says.

Not in the Constitution

A common misconception is that the phrase "separation of church and state" actually appears in the U.S. Constitution. It does not. The First Amendment states, "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof …."

Thomas Jefferson is, in fact, the sole author of the phrase "separation of church and state," and he used it in his personal correspondence – specifically, a Jan. 1, 1802, letter to Nehemiah Dodge, Ephraim Robbins and Stephen S. Nelson of the Danbury Baptist Association in Connecticut.

Jefferson wrote, "Believing with you that religion is a matter which lies solely between man and his god, that he owes account to none other for his faith or his worship, that the legitimate powers of government reach actions only and not opinions, I contemplate with sovereign reverence that act of the whole American people which declared that their legislature should 'make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof,' thus building a wall of eternal separation between Church and State."

"The plaintiffs in these two cases – including veterans and members of a variety of religions and backgrounds – filed these actions to reinforce the principle that the government should honor all servicemembers, not just those of one preferred faith," said Peter Eliasberg, managing attorney of the ACLU of Southern California and lead attorney in *Salazar v. Buono*.

Sasser contends there's a certain monetary payoff for the ACLU if it wins the case. The ACLU has been awarded millions of dollars in attorneys fees from winning similar establishment-clause lawsuits in the past, including $1 million in the Dover Area School District intelligent-design case and nearly $500,000 in the Judge Roy Moore Ten Commandments case.

"I would estimate that the ACLU has, at least, about $1 million in attorneys' fees sunk into this case," Sasser said. "I would not be shocked if it had $2 million sunk into this case. At some point, this case had to even look to the ACLU as, 'Maybe we shouldn't have done this. Maybe this is kind of silly.' But because of the attorneys' fees that are out there available to them, they may be motivated by that to go ahead and press on."

Domino Effect. Sasser believes that *Salazar v. Buono* will be a landmark ruling that will affect similar lawsuits throughout the country. One involves the Mount Soledad Veterans Memorial near San Diego, which has been the site of a battle between the city and the ACLU for more than 20 years. The point of contention: a 29-foot Latin cross erected in 1954 to honor U.S. veterans. The cross originally was on city property; the property was transferred to the federal government in 2007.

Even though the man who brought on the original lawsuit – atheist Phillip Paulson, who, in 1989, claimed that allowing a cross to remain on public land violated both the California and U.S. constitutions – died in 2006, the ACLU has stayed with the case and is now targeting the federal government.

"The central issue on this was an objection to what was perceived as a religious symbol in a government park, and as it turns out, the ACLU essentially made its point, I believe, and got the city to sell the land to our association," says William Kellogg, president of the Mount Soledad Memorial Association. "So from my perspective, they achieved separation of church and state. When they realized it was not going to result in the destruction of the cross, they didn't like it, and so they opposed that sale to our private organization, and things kept on going.

William Kellogg calls the ACLU's Mount Soledad litigation "vindictive." Sandy Huffaker Jr.

The Mount Soledad Veterans Memorial near San Diego has been the object of ACLU litigation for more than 20 years. The original plaintiff in the case died in 2006. Sandy Huffaker Jr.

"We have done a whole lot to point out that it is not just a stand-alone religious monument – that it is truly about veterans. At this point, it appears to me that the legal action is a little bit more on the vindictive side than it is on the actual issue of separation of church and state."

That case currently rests in the Ninth Circuit Court, as does *Barnes-Wallace v. Boy Scouts of America*, which also stands to be affected by the Mojave decision. The City of San Diego leases two pieces of property – Camp Balboa in Balboa Park and Fiesta Island in Mission Bay Park – to Boy Scouts of America's San Diego Imperial Council. The Scouts built a campground and an aquatic center on the sites; both are open to the public. The ACLU took issue with the Scouts' presence, contending the organization should not be allowed to lease public land because of the Scouts' leadership policies and religious beliefs. The Boy Scout Oath includes the phrase, "To do my duty to God and my country."

Both the Mount Soledad and Balboa Park cases will be heavily influenced by the *Salazar v. Buono* ruling, Sasser says, "because they have very similar issues in regards to standing. Standing is the doctrine of who is allowed to bring a lawsuit. Who is affected by the Boy Scouts leasing property from the city? Nobody. But in

Camp Balboa in San Diego may be ruled off-limits to the Boy Scouts organization that built it. The ACLU claims that "duty to God" in the Scouts' oath violates the U.S. Constitution. Sandy Huffaker Jr.

standing doctrine, sometimes courts just invent things just to allow certain lawsuits to go forward. That's what happened with the Ninth Circuit. (*Salazar v. Buono*) may have something to say about standing, and if it does, that may directly affect that Balboa Park case."

Sasser, whose office represents The American Legion as an amicus (friend of the court) in these cases, said those seeking to remove the Scouts from Balboa Park have never actually set foot in the park. "They are simply anticipating that they might be offended if they see a Boy Scout run by in the park," Sasser says. "I don't know what merit badges they might find most offensive. They haven't been to the park and been offended, but they're certain they might be offended when they show up."

Sasser is confident that the Supreme Court will rule in favor of allowing the Mojave cross to stay up. As for the final vote, he thinks it could be as close as 5-4 or as sweeping as 9-0. Should the court rule against the cross, memorials across the nation and abroad could be next, he says.

"The veterans memorial in downtown Indianapolis has angels all over it," he said. "It's been there since just after the Civil War. It'll have to come down. The Canadian Cross of Sacrifice donated in the 1920s to the United States ... sits in Arlington Cemetery. It's going to have to be torn down. The Argonne Cross – the only other World War I memorial in Arlington Cemetery – it'll have to be torn down. Where it says on the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier 'Herein lies a soldier known but to God,' they're going to have to sandblast 'God' off that marble, and they're going to have to, I guess, chisel in 'known to no one.'

"What's really sad about this is, if this memorial out here in the middle of nowhere is unconstitutional, then all those veterans memorials in the shape of crosses are unconstitutional. That's a big problem."

So while *Salazar v. Buono* waits for its Oct. 7 court date, Henry and Wanda Sandoz wait for the day they can take the Mojave Desert cross out of its court-ordered box. "I've been thinking, 'What kind of celebration should we have?'" Wanda says. "We'll have to do something."

Wanda and Henry don't want to think about coming out on the losing end of the Supreme Court's decision. "(I'd) feel really bad," Henry says. "All our work and everyone else's was in vain, then, and our country is going down the drink."

"It would be so sad for the veterans ... all the veterans who have gone, the veterans who are here," Wanda says. "All the beautiful war memorials in Washington, D.C. – I know they're prettier than ours, but the meaning is the same. It's honoring our veterans. That cross is doing it every bit as well as any war memorial that's anywhere. If someone else had put it up, it wouldn't have the same meaning. But World War I veterans put it up there. That should mean a lot. It does to us."

Steve Brooks is senior editor of The American Legion Magazine.

Resolution No. 310: Eliminate Damages and Attorney Fees in Establishment-Clause Lawsuits
90th American Legion National Convention, Phoenix

Delegates to the 2008 National Convention in Phoenix passed Resolution 310 in order to combat the ACLU's establishment-clause lawsuits that result in taxpayer-funded attorneys fees. The resolved clause reads as follows:

Resolved, by The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Phoenix, Arizona, August 26, 27, 28, 2008, that The American Legion urge the Congress of the United States to amend the Civil Rights Attorney Fees Act of 1976, 42 U.S. Code Section 1988, the Equal Access to Justice Act, 28 U.S. Code 2412, and any and all other federal statutes, to limit remedies to injunctive relief and declaratory relief only, and to rescind the authority of the courts to award attorney fees to the prevailing party in lawsuits brought under the Establishment of Religion Clause in the U.S. Constitution.

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Results not typical.

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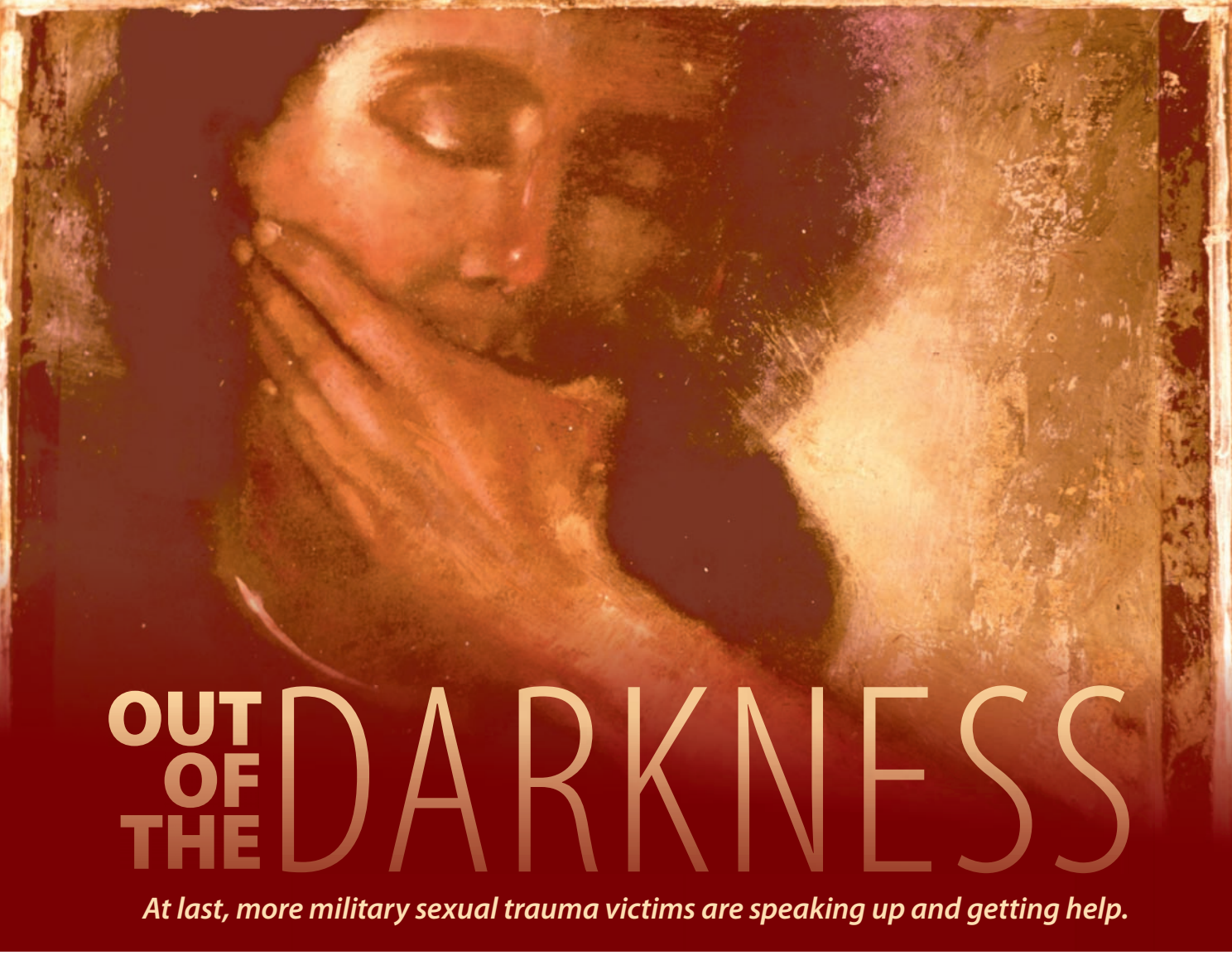


OUT OF THE DARKNESS

At last, more military sexual trauma victims are speaking up and getting help.

BY KEN OLSEN

Mickiela Montoya's male coworker confronted her as she walked across the pitch-black compound. It was 2005, and she had just finished an exhausting 12-hour shift at Camp Speicher's supply warehouse.

"He said, 'You know, if I was to rape you right now, no one could hear you scream,'" Montoya remembers. "Then he asked, 'What would you do?'"

Montoya knew she had no way of summoning help – the night was filled with the rumble of diesel generators powering the U.S. Army base 90 miles northwest of Baghdad. So the 19-year-old National Guard specialist from Los Angeles bluffed.

"I would stab you," she told the soldier threatening her. He didn't quite believe her, she says, and questioned if she actually had a knife. Montoya didn't blink or give him any clue she was intimidated. Finally, he backed away.

After that night, Montoya never went anywhere without a knife. She practiced pulling it quickly in case anyone tried to jump her.

"I will never know if he was serious," Montoya says. "I didn't want to find out."

She eventually transferred to one of the base's most dangerous places: guarding a checkpoint on the main highway. There, she wouldn't have to work alongside the man who had confronted her. "It was really scary," she says of night-guard duty at the checkpoint. "The crazy thing is, I did feel safer there."

But Montoya kept the rape threat to herself.

"Telling someone wasn't going to help the situation," she says. "I didn't want it to be like I was all shook up about it."

Montoya's decision to keep quiet is not rare. The majority of sexual-trauma victims – ranging from repeated sexual harassment to rape – never report what happened, whether they are citizens or soldiers, men or women. But others are through with silence. More military women than ever are fighting back, helping to raise awareness of a difficult problem confronting the armed forces and society. Military sexual trauma, as VA calls it, isn't new, nor is it gender-specific. There are nearly as many male victims as female.

DoD and VA were increasing their efforts to deal with sexual trauma even before Montoya came home four years ago. DoD opened the Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Office and established a comprehensive care program for victims that includes sexual-assault response coordinators, victim advocates, chaplains and health-care personnel. The program assists victims with medical care and counseling, and, with victim approval, can also include talking to victims' commands and supporting them through the military judicial process.

More sexual assaults are being reported, but it's unclear if that increase is a result of greater awareness, a growing number of assaults, or both. In addition, sexual assaults only reflect part of the picture. Military sexual trauma includes repeated and threatening sexual harassment.

VA, meanwhile, is encouraging victims to break their silence – at least with a counselor – rather than try to push it aside. "The experience of military sexual trauma, especially the experience of rape, puts the victim at very high risk for post-traumatic stress disorder – more so than heavy combat exposure, more so than a motor-vehicle accident," says Amy Street, a clinical psychologist with the VA Boston Healthcare System's National Center for PTSD. The resulting problems – including depression, substance abuse and relationship problems – can be compounded when victims don't seek care.

"Victims are often reluctant to come forward and tell others about their experiences out of fear that they will be judged or blamed," says Street, who is also director of education and training for VA's Military Sexual Trauma Support Team. "These men and women were harmed in the service of their country in the same way someone who experienced combat injuries was. We can help them get to a place where their lives are not defined by the experience."

Conventional Mythology. Military sexual trauma started getting serious attention after the 1991 Tailhook scandal, in which a group of Navy pilots assaulted 83 female officers and seven male officers at a Las Vegas hotel. Incidents at Aberdeen Proving Ground in 1996 and the Air Force Academy in 2003 pushed the issue back in the spotlight. One result was a law requiring free medical and mental health care for veterans dealing with any issue connected to military sexual trauma.

It's difficult to get an accurate assessment of the problem. Sexual assault is one of the most under-reported crimes in the United States. VA says about 20 percent of its female patients and about 1 percent of male patients report some sort of military sexual trauma. Because so many more men serve, there are nearly as many male victims as female victims, VA says. Some 43,693 men and 48,106 women who were seen at a VA facility in fiscal 2008 reported experiencing sexual trauma during military service. This includes veterans from World War II through today. "These numbers suggest that the problem of military sexual trauma is not simply caused by women's increasing service as part of combat operations," Street says.

"Women have conducted themselves superbly in both air and ground combat, and are here to stay," adds Helen Benedict, a Columbia University journalism professor and author of "The Lonely Soldier." "They need to be given all the respect any soldier deserves, and they need to not be afraid of soldiers on their side."

Sexual trauma is not just a problem in the military, health-care experts emphasize. It's also pervasive in civilian society.

Military sexual trauma, however, differs because incidents occur where victims live and work, keeping them in close proximity to perpetrators, Connie Lee Best, a clinical psychologist at the Medical University of South Carolina and retired Navy reserve captain, told Congress two years ago. The perpetrator often has a higher rank and can influence the victim's promotion and assignments. And "the risk of re-victimization is real," Best said. These are all reasons victims are reluctant to report sexual trauma.

Victims may also see reporting assaults as conflicting with the military ethos of "strength and excellence, of sucking it up and getting on with the mission," Street says.

Servicemembers are reluctant to even report sexual harassment because they fear retribution. It's a well-founded worry, Montoya says. A woman in her company complained about relentless sexual harassment and was blackballed by the rest of her unit, compounding her misery, she said.

Such reluctance to report is understandable for other reasons. "In the civilian world, if you're sexually harassed at your workplace, you can legally quit your job," says Anuradha K. Bhagwati, executive director of the Service Women's Action Network. "If it happens in the military, you'd go to jail if you attempted to leave your job. It can be unbearable, even life-threatening, to be sexually harassed within an institution that fails to prosecute perpetrators and encourages silence, and

LEGION URGES IMPROVED SERVICES FOR WOMEN

In May 2006, the National Executive Committee of The American Legion passed Resolution No. 25, addressing the organization's policy on women veterans. It urged the completion of a follow-up to VA's 1985 survey on the needs, attitudes and experiences of women veterans – a study that would "reflect the collective needs of all female veterans, past and current."

The Legion also encouraged VA to make gender-specific services more available and improve outreach efforts to female veterans living in remote areas. It urged VA "to acknowledge the unique needs of female homeless veterans when designing programs to assist them with housing, employment, and treatment for mental-health issues."

The resolution also called on VA to provide adequate funding for Vet Center counseling that focuses on military sexual trauma-related mental issues, and to hire more such counselors and train existing ones to reduce waiting times for treatment.

oftentimes blames or punishes victims for reporting harassment, painting them as unfairly ruining the careers or reputations of servicemen, or for destroying unit cohesion."

A Deeper Silence. Men find it particularly difficult to come forward.

"There is the idea that, as a woman, you may experience a sexual assault," Street says. "There's not that idea in society when it comes to men. So when it happens to a man, there's no way to make sense of it."

Veterans advocate Susan Avila-Smith agrees that, for men, the issue can be extremely difficult. Those who do come forward, she says, find "there are not a lot of services for them." Smith is a military rape victim and founder of Women Organizing Women, a group that assists both sexes.

Jeff Elizalde kept silent about his rape for 30 years. Even today, he struggles with the memories, outrage and a sense of disbelief over what happened when he was a young Marine Corps private stationed on Okinawa in the late 1970s.

"There were rumors that the staff sergeant had sexually assaulted other people, and they moved him around base to base," Elizalde recalls. "There were enough people there, I didn't think anything would happen." One night, he says, the sergeant invited Elizalde to accompany him to a party. Along the way, the sergeant knocked him out and dragged him into an empty hut. "When I came to , he was raping me," says the gray-haired 49-year-old veteran, his eyes watering. "I fought him off and ran."

Elizalde soon was drinking as many as two cases of beer a day and blacking out. The 7th Marines put him in an inpatient alcohol-treatment program at Camp Pendleton that ultimately failed. Eighteen months after the assault, Elizalde hastily agreed to an "other than honorable discharge" instead of being court-martialed for drinking offenses and other disciplinary problems. Had he remained in the Marines, Elizalde feared he would be sent to Okinawa to finish his tour.

Elizalde worked in his family's restaurant in northern California, then followed construction jobs to Oregon. He ruptured two disks in his neck in 1995 and, after battling with the Social Security Administration for five years, was declared 100-percent disabled. "If I had not had a brother during that time, I'd have been out on the street," Elizalde says.

Today, he struggles to survive on his monthly Social Security check. He's fortunate to have access to some mental-health care as a result of his years as a union laborer, but he would prefer VA treatment.

Three years ago, a television program about sexual abuse prompted Elizalde to finally tell a mental-health counselor at Kaiser Permanente about the rape. A letter from the counselor details Elizalde's flashbacks, outbursts of anger, and his tendency to barricade himself in his tiny condo after a nightmare. "It is my opinion that you suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder, secondary to being sexually assaulted in 1977," the counselor wrote. "In addition, I believe it is likely that your heavy drinking afterward was indeed a misguided effort to 'self-medicate.'"

The Portland VA Medical Center is willing to treat any assault-related problem for free, Elizalde says. But he cannot easily access the care because he lives 50 miles south of the facility and no longer has a car – a consequence of a drunk-driving arrest in early 2008. Meanwhile, Elizalde is frustrated by many failed attempts to have the terms of his discharge modified so he can access the full range of VA health care.

"I want help from the military," Elizalde says, leaning against the edge of his weathered front door, which bears Marine Corps insignia. "I want them to admit I was wronged." He looks at the ground and slowly shakes his head. "I don't know what the future holds for me," he adds. "I do know that if there's me, then there's a lot more people like me."

Coming Wave. Increasing awareness of military sexual trauma, veterans outreach, and repeated long deployments to Iraq and Afghanistan are expected to continue pressuring VA's mental-health resources.

"I believe VA is staffed by some of the best mental-health providers and some with exceptional experience in military sexual trauma," Best, the clinical psychologist and university professor, told Congress in April 2007. But one of the problems VA faces in dealing with veterans who have experienced military sexual trauma is one of sheer numbers. As a character in the movie "Jaws" put it after seeing the legendary shark, "We're gonna need a bigger boat," Best said. "That is what I would say to VA: we are going to need a bigger boat."

Last June, the U.S. House of Representatives passed legislation requiring VA to enhance programs for victims of military sexual trauma and PTSD, as well as expand health-care services for female veterans and their children.

Meanwhile, military sexual-assault victims are running into the same type of bureaucratic hurdles that bog down many VA disability cases. VA ratings staff are often quick to reject military sexual-trauma claims because the VA Clinician's Guide deems the symptoms of PTSD "relatively easy to fabricate," says Rachel Natelson of the Service Women's Action Network. Claims raters also tend to dismiss mental-health diagnoses made by VA physicians. "Despite the fact that the majority of my own clients have submitted military sexual-trauma diagnoses from VA counselors, most have received decisions indicating they have failed to establish the condition, much less connected it to their service."

Establishing service connection also can be difficult because sexual harassment reports are removed from personnel files every two years, adds Benedict, author of "The Lonely Soldier." Veterans often cannot produce the required records.

Not all VA medical centers are complying with the mandate that they treat military sexual-trauma issues for free. VA's Inspector General launched a national review of the issue in May at the request of Sen. Daniel Akaka, D-Hawaii, after an audit revealed that nearly 90 veterans at the Austin Outpatient Clinic were inappropriately billed for military sexual-trauma care.

Making a Difference. Victims find it difficult to use VA care for other reasons. The VA women's clinic closest to Mickiela Montoya is only open a few hours each Wednesday. That makes it inaccessible to Montoya, who works as a caregiver for a disabled teenager during the day, and as a waitress at night to make ends meet for herself and her 2-year-old daughter. "It's so absurd," Montoya says. "I go to a free women's clinic if I need anything."

In addition to expanding programs for women, the military should take a tougher stand on sexual harassment as it steps up efforts to reduce the problem internally, Montoya says. "When the commander and the first sergeant are aware of it and make it clear they won't tolerate it, soldiers won't do it. But if they don't care about it ...."

Meanwhile, Montoya plans to return to college to study political science, with the aim of speaking out and making a difference. "I'm not the first," she says of the troubles she's encountered as a female combat veteran, an assault victim and a single mother. "But I want to be one of the last."

Ken Olsen is a freelance writer living in Oregon.

HELP IS AVAILABLE

DoD has a comprehensive victim-care program available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Sexual-assault coordinators, victim advocates, chaplains and health-care personnel are available to assist victims; they can be reached through post or base phone operators.

Military One Source This 24/7 resource provides contact with local sexual-assault response coordinators and victim advocates, enabling victims to make a restricted or unrestricted report. Restricted reporting means the assault report is confidential. The victim receives a full spectrum of care, but chain of command is not notified and no disciplinary action is launched. Unrestricted reporting means the chain of command and military justice system are involved in the process. ***www.militaryonesource.com***

Reporting an assault
In the United States: ***(800) 342-9647***
Overseas: ***00-800-3429-6477***
Overseas Collect: ***1-484-530-5908***

More information is available online:
www.myduty.mil or ***www.sapr.mil***

VA has treatment providers for victims of military sexual trauma at all of its medical facilities.

www.publichealth.va.gov/womenshealth/trauma.asp

VA's general benefit information hotline
(800) 827-1000

Vet Centers may also have resources:
www.vetcenter.va.gov

Crude Realities

Combine America's thirst for foreign oil with monopolistic producers who finance global terrorists, and you get a problem in need of an urgent solution.

BY ANNE KORIN

In his book "Bear, Bacon, and Bullets: The Cultural Factor in Coalition Warfare from Gallipoli to Iraq," Gal Luft notes that, when U.S. troops arrived in Saudi Arabia to defend it from Iraqi forces in the first Gulf War, the Saudis wanted them to remove American sewage out of the country so non-Muslim waste would not contaminate Saudi soil. They also demanded that military hospitals keep Muslim and Christian blood rations separate, so that Christian blood would not be transfused into a Muslim vein.

The attitude that these demands illustrate serves as the rule, rather than the exception, in characterizing U.S.–Saudi relations in the 64 years since President Franklin D. Roosevelt met King Abdul Aziz ibn Saud, founder of the Saudi monarchy.

From the start, the United States has treated Saudi Arabia, which holds a quarter of global oil reserves, with considerable deference, starting with FDR's decision to refrain from smoking in the king's presence – when he could not hold on anymore, FDR excused himself and went to the ship's elevator to smoke a cigarette – all the way to President Bush's hand-holding and President Obama's deep bowing before Abdul Aziz's son, King Abdullah, during the G20 summit last April.

These symbolic acts of self-degradation mask a much worse reality of political obsequiousness that seriously undermines our national security. Saudi Arabia, after all, is the biggest funder and

proliferator of radical Sunni Islam. Under Secretary of the Treasury for Terrorism and Financial Intelligence Stuart Levey remarked in 2007, "If I could somehow snap my fingers and cut off the (terrorist) funding from one country, it would be Saudi Arabia."

Embroiled in a struggle against radical Islam, nuclear proliferation and totalitarianism, the United States faces a crude reality: more than 70 percent of the world's proven oil reserves are concentrated in countries where radical Islam is on the rise. While the U.S. economy bleeds, petro-dictatorships around the world – even at oil prices well below last summer's stunning $145-per-barrel peak – are on the receiving end of profit windfalls.

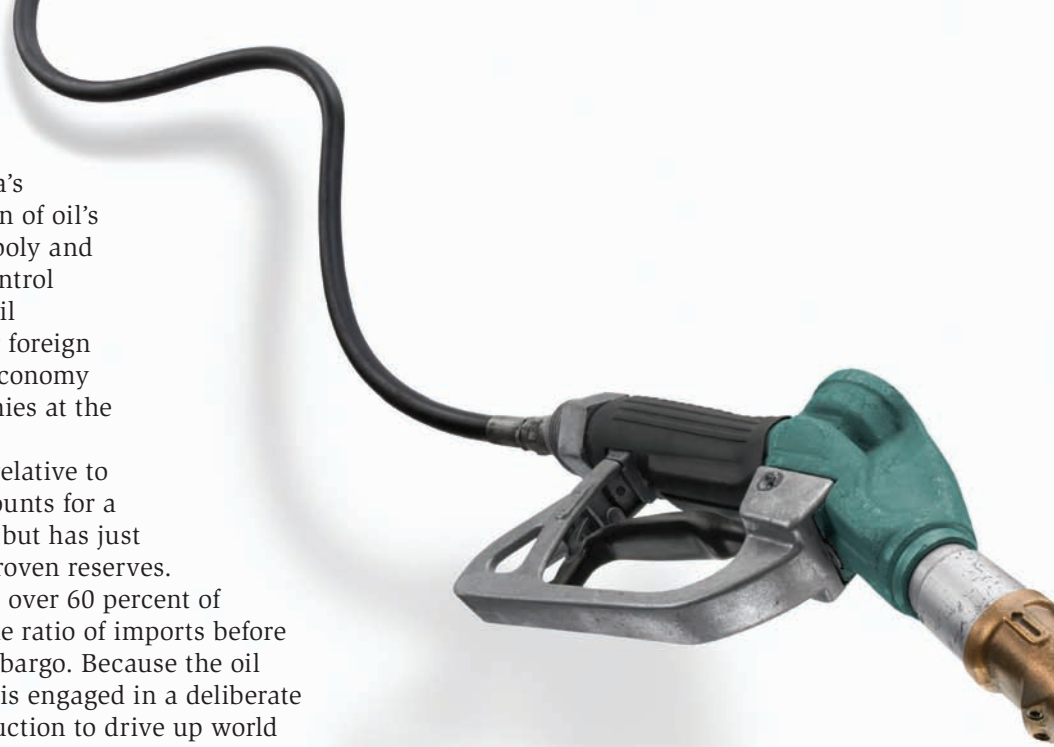
In 2005, the net export revenues of the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) were $473 billion, more than double the amount generated in 2001. In 2008, the figure surpassed $1 trillion. Some of that money finds its way, through official and unofficial government handouts, charities and well-connected businesses, to organizations promoting militant Islam. The second-largest holder of world oil reserves after Saudi Arabia is Iran – the world's biggest funder and proliferator of radical Shia Islam. As the leading countries of the world's largest oil cartel, these two are in a position to thwart each and every U.S. foreign policy priority.

The flow of petrodollars from oil-consuming economies to the coffers of producers not only casts a large shadow over America's prospects of winning the war on terrorism, it also limits U.S. diplomatic maneuverability on issues such as human rights and nuclear proliferation. Perhaps the most powerful statement of the impact on America's ability to accomplish its foreign policy goals came in April 2006 from then-Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, who told the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, "We do have to do something about the energy problem. I can tell you that nothing has really taken me aback more, as secretary of State, than the way that the politics of energy is ... warping diplomacy around the world. It has given extraordinary power to some states that are using that power in not very good ways for the international system, states that would otherwise have very little power."

U.S. diplomacy is further complicated by the thirst for energy of China, India and other emerging countries; they are becoming increasingly dependent on the very same countries the United States is trying to rein in. Rogue nations like Iran and Sudan can now buy themselves the support of a third of humanity, not to mention the protection of Chinese veto power on the U.N. Security Council, by signing energy deals with China and India. Oil also lubricates the so-called Bolivarian revolution led by Venezuela President Hugo Chavez, who has used his country's oil wealth to buy political influence in the Western Hemisphere, and to consolidate an anti-U.S. bloc in the region.

A Strategic Monopoly. The unique strategic importance of oil to the modern economy, beyond that of any other commodity today, is not due to the amount of oil we consume or import. Most people, after all, aren't particularly concerned about how many bananas we consume nor how many computers we import. Oil's strategic importance stems from its virtual monopoly over transportation fuel – the global economy's very enabler. Because the American way of life is one of the most oil-dependent in the world, U.S. oil dependence is "the albatross of U.S. national security," as Indiana Sen. Richard Lugar once put it. Contrary to popular belief, oil has a negligible role in electricity generation. Only 2 percent of U.S. electricity is generated from it, and conversely only about 2 percent of U.S. oil demand is due to electricity generation. But with 97 percent of U.S. transportation energy based on petroleum, oil

President Obama greets Saudi Arabia's King Abdullah during their meeting at the G20 Summit in London last April. AP



is the lifeblood of America's economy. The combination of oil's transportation-fuel monopoly and a manipulative cartel's control over most of the world's oil reserves is paralyzing our foreign policy, bankrupting our economy and bankrolling our enemies at the same time.

America is poor in oil, relative to its need; our country accounts for a quarter of global demand but has just 3 percent of the world's proven reserves. The United States imports over 60 percent of its oil, more than twice the ratio of imports before the 1973-1974 Arab oil embargo. Because the oil cartel, by its very nature, is engaged in a deliberate effort to manipulate production to drive up world prices, efforts to expand domestic petroleum supply or to crimp petroleum demand will be enough to reduce our strategic vulnerability.

While much public debate on this issue has been dominated by calls to "drill more" or to "use less," the fact is that drilling and efficiency are two sides of the same coin. Neither will strip oil of its strategic status. While these policies could perhaps keep some of our dollars from migrating overseas, they only perpetuate the petroleum monopoly in transportation and do nothing to weaken the oil cartel. When non-OPEC countries drill more, OPEC simply drills less.

The United States has nearly 21 million barrels of proven oil reserves, ranking 12th in the world.

When we conserve, OPEC also drills less – witness OPEC's multiple production cuts in 2008 and 2009, in response to the recession-driven drop in demand. Incredibly, despite the cartel's ownership of 78 percent of proven global reserves of conventional crude oil, it produces about as much oil today as it did 30 years ago – about 30 million barrels a day – even though the global economy and non-OPEC production roughly doubled over the same period.

Changing which countries we buy oil from will not make any difference, either, because oil is a fungible commodity. Think of the oil market as a swimming pool: producers pour oil in, consumers take oil out. We don't import all or even most of our oil from the Middle East. In fact, the Middle East is the source for barely one quarter of our imports. But that doesn't lessen the control that Middle Eastern countries, which sit on some two thirds of world oil reserves, have over the world market.

For instance, we don't import a drop of oil from Iran. But if Tehran decided to reduce the country's oil exports in retaliation for efforts to thwart its nuclear program, the increase in price would be felt across the board. Therefore, if we just shuffle around our sources of supply by buying oil from different countries than we do today, it will not reduce our vulnerability to the oil cartel's market manipulation. Someone else will buy the oil we would have bought from supplier A, and we will buy the oil they were buying from supplier B – in the end, no difference whatsoever will be felt by the oil exporters.

When the British Navy made the shift from coal to oil in 1915, then-Lord of the Admiralty Winston Churchill famously remarked that "safety and certainty in oil lies in variety, and variety alone." To diminish the strategic importance of oil to the

international system, it is now critical to expand the Churchillian doctrine beyond geographical variety to a variety of fuels and feedstocks.

Not long ago, technology broke the power of another strategic commodity. Until around the end of the 19th century, salt was a strategic commodity because it was the only means of preserving meat. Odd as it seems today, salt mines conferred national power, and wars were even fought for their control. Today, no nation sways history because it has salt mines. To most of us, there is no salt-dependence problem at all; canning, electricity and refrigeration decisively ended salt's monopoly of meat preservation, and thus its strategic importance. We can and must do the same thing to oil.

We must do so, however, without falling from the frying pan to the fire. Many call to shift our transportation sector to natural gas, but those numbers are not terribly different from our oil numbers – with a time delay. The United States holds about 3 percent of conventional reserves of natural gas and accounts for a quarter of natural gas demand. We don't import nearly as much natural gas as we do oil, but if our natural gas demand drastically increases, we will need to. Most of the world's natural gas reserves are concentrated in five countries: Russia, Iran, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates. They are already engaged in discussions on the establishment of an OPEC-like natural-gas cartel.

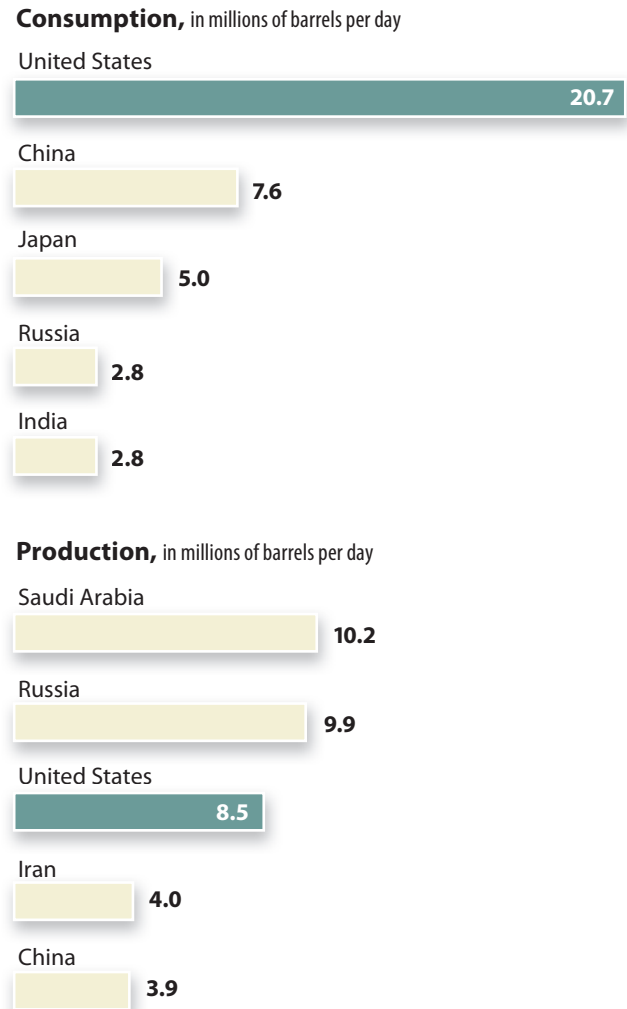
We also need to focus on technologies that are available today. A car in the United States has a lifespan of about 17 years and, in a non-recession year, some 16 million new cars roll onto America's roads. This year, that number will likely be less than 11 million. That means if we wait decades for the introduction of some far–off, research-stage technology, it will still take some 17 years after that until the fleet turns over. That's why, while research is certainly useful, we have to focus on deployment. So what should we do?

Turning Oil into Salt. For less than $100 extra, automakers can make virtually any car a flex-fuel vehicle, capable of running on any combination of gasoline and a variety of alcohols such as ethanol and methanol, made from agricultural material, waste, coal and natural gas. (Alcohol does not just mean ethanol, and ethanol does not just mean corn.) Alcohol is more corrosive than gasoline; thus flex-fuel vehicles – which look and perform exactly like regular cars – employ corrosion-resistant materials that enable them to handle the fuel variety.

Flex-fuel vehicles provide a platform for fuels to compete and let consumers and the market choose the winning fuels and feedstocks, based on economics. In Brazil, where sugar cane-based ethanol is widely used, the share of flex-fuel vehicles in new car sales rose from 4 percent to 67 percent in just three years, and now stands at

World oil

The United States accounts for a quarter of global oil demand.



Source: Energy Information Administration, 2007

about 90 percent. These cars are manufactured by the same auto makers that sell to the U.S. market.

The proliferation of flex-fuel vehicles in Brazil has driven fuel competition at the pump to the point where, in 2008, more ethanol was used in Brazil than gasoline. Drivers defended themselves from high oil prices by choosing a different fuel. Oddly, while we don't tax oil imports, we impose a 54-cent-per-gallon tariff on ethanol imports. If most new cars were flex-fuel vehicles, repealing this tariff would open the fuel market for about a hundred countries that have suitable climates for growing sugar cane.

While ethanol is made from agricultural products like corn, sugar cane and, possibly in the future, cellulosic biomass, methanol can be made from all of the above plus coal, natural gas and recycled carbon dioxide, another future possibility. The United States has about a quarter of global coal reserves. China, which also has a lot of coal, has denoted methanol as a strategic transportation fuel and has drastically increased its production capacity.

Methanol can be made from coal for about 50 cents per gallon and has about half the energy of gasoline. When it comes to making fuel from agricultural waste, a ton of biomass will produce 50 percent more energy if converted to methanol – not ethanol.

An open fuel standard is critical to breaking oil's fuel monopoly; it would ensure that new cars will be flex-fuel vehicles. Legislation has been introduced in the House and Senate, H.R. 1476 and S. 835; if enacted, it would put such a standard in place.

Liquid-fuel choice is critical, but we can do even more. Using electricity as a transportation fuel enables it to compete with petroleum, since we generate very little electricity from oil. Plug-in hybrid electric vehicles (PHEVs) do just that. These vehicles have internal combustion engines and liquid fuel tanks, providing the range of a standard car. They also have batteries that can be charged from standard electrical outlets. About half the cars in the United States are driven 25 miles a day or less, so a plug-in hybrid could handle shorter drives with electric power and use a gas engine for longer drives.

BYD, a Chinese firm, seems to be in the lead on PHEVs, mass-producing full-sized cars with 60-mile-range batteries and gas engines for about $22,000 each. Stretching gasoline with electricity, PHEVs can reach oil-economy levels of more than 100 miles per gallon of gasoline without compromising the size, safety or power of a vehicle. A flex-fuel PHEV – powered by 80 percent alcohol and 20 percent gasoline – could reach oil-economy levels of more than 500 miles per gallon.

The BYD e6 was on display last June in Shenzhen, China. BYD, the Chinese battery and electric car manufacturer, is a leading producer of PHEVs, full-sized cars equipped with 60-mile-range batteries and gas engines. This model could hit U.S. markets by 2011. AP

Sooner or later, economic growth will resume and, with it, our appetite for oil. Once that happens, we can expect prices to hit record highs again, due to OPEC supply constraints. With high prices, the wealth transfer from consuming countries to oil exporters will continue. A nationwide deployment of flex-fuel cars, flex-fuel plug-in hybrids and alternative fuels could take place within two decades. But such a transformation will not occur by itself.

In a perfect world, government would not need to intervene in the energy market; in ours, the United States is taking an unacceptable risk by leaving the problem to be solved by an "invisible hand."

The energy market is not free. It is manipulated by a cartel, heavily rigged in favor of the status quo, and, as the case of the ethanol tariff shows, riddled with protectionism. Choosing not to embrace an open fuel standard is choosing to preserve oil's monopoly in the transportation sector and, with it, OPEC's growing stranglehold over the global economy.

Anne Korin is co-director of the Institute for the Analysis of Global Security, chairwoman of the Set America Free Coalition, and co-author of the upcoming book "Turning Oil into Salt."

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THE WORLD ACCORDING TO JOE MATTHEWS

Past national commander from Texas looks back on his colorful career as a Navy man and a Legion leader.

Joe Matthews joined the U.S. Navy in 1932, when 12 million Americans were unemployed, the "Bonus Army" of World War I veterans marched against Washington, and gas was 10 cents a gallon. He served on board the battleship *West Virginia* and the minesweeper *Oglala*; both ships were destined to be sunk at Pearl Harbor. A Seabee in World War II, Matthews joined The American Legion in 1945 and was narrowly defeated in his 1962 bid for national commander. A decade later, he won the election and led the organization during the last year U.S. troops fought in Vietnam. He's met six presidents – Truman, Eisenhower, Johnson, Nixon, Reagan and Carter. At 96, he still goes to work at the business he started more than 60 years ago. PNC Matthews recently spoke with *The American Legion Magazine*.

Joe Matthews, 96, still oversees the business he started in Fort Worth, Texas, in 1946: selling safety equipment to telephone linemen. Richard Pruitt

SEE VIDEO OF THE MATTHEWS INTERVIEW ONLINE: www.legion.org/whatsnew/legiontv

Q: *What were your early days in The American Legion like, among all the World War I veterans?*
A: They were very interesting characters, and they argued with each other an awful lot. It was real odd to me; I wasn't used to that. Of course, I looked at them with a certain amount of awe, and they would tell stories you wouldn't really believe.

They had a pilot who I knew very well. In fact, I appointed him as chairman of a commission: Roscoe Turner. I used to love to listen to him sit and talk. They used to fly by the seat of their pants to get the national commanders around the country. Later, the national commanders weren't allowed to fly in single-engine planes, and they had some other restrictions about flying.

Harry Colmery, who wrote the GI Bill, was seriously considered for the presidency of the United States. He was one of the nicest guys you'd ever meet. And you would be talking to him, and he'd be standing there with his cane and his eyes would be almost closed. And you'd think, "My Lord, he's going to sleep on me!" But that mind was always working.

He told roomfuls of us about how he wrote the GI Bill. He never really talked about the difficulty of it, but he did talk about the necessity of it. The men from World War I came back to a country that was definitely not ready to receive them. A lot of

them were selling apples and stuff on street corners, and getting by on peanuts, so to speak.

Q: *How did you wind up joining the Navy in 1932?*
A: I graduated from high school in 1930 and went to college for one year. My mother told me, "Joe, we can't send you back to college. We don't have the money." So I spent about a year hitchhiking around the United States, trying to find a job. I was down in the Rio Grande Valley, selling silk hosiery. And women weren't even wearing hose, let alone silk ones. I wasn't making a living at it, so I finally decided to go back home in Pennsylvania.

I set out to hitchhike home for Christmas, and I had a quarter. When I got to Grove City, Pa., I still had that quarter. I kept that quarter because I figured if I had that, I wasn't broke. And I could always find a hamburger for a nickel or maybe a dime. But I worked my way through, earning my breakfast, earning my lunch, asking people if there was any kind of work I could do for them.

I went on home, and two guys I graduated from high school with came over to the house and said they were going to hitchhike down to Pittsburgh and join the Navy. I said I didn't want to join the Navy, but that I'd go down there with them. But I passed the written and physical exams, so I joined the Navy in 1932 and got out in 1936.

It was a lot stricter than it is now. Much, much stricter. You didn't sass back to a petty officer, even. I slept in a hammock for two years on the USS *West Virginia* and spent most of my first tour scrubbing the deck. Most of the men were glad to be in the Navy. Most of them faced the same thing I had – they couldn't find work. I had three squares a day and I had a job to do. In fact, I debated about whether to ship over after my four years were up.

Q: *You rejoined the Navy during World War II and served with the Seabees. What was that like?*
A: I was married, I had two kids, and I had a decent job. But I decided that I owed it to my country to go into the Navy. What I didn't know was that I wouldn't see my family again for 28 months. Now, that's pretty hard to swallow. When I was on the atoll Eniwetok, I used to go down to the water's edge at night and look back towards home and think about how far away it was.

They gave me a rating as a quartermaster, which paid $72 a month. The Seabees had no more use for a quartermaster than the man in the moon. So they eventually cross-rated me to boatswain's mate, and I made chief.

Q: *Describe some of your experiences as national commander in 1972 and 1973.*
A: I went to every place I was invited. In fact, I went to Russia because Nixon asked me. Don Johnson called me – he was head of the Veterans Administration at the time – and said I needed to be in Washington, D.C. So I flew out there, and he met me in a little private dining room at the Army-Navy Club.

And he said, "When you're national commander, Nixon wants you to go to Russia and Poland. He's already made preliminary contacts with the Kremlin." He said everything was cleared, as far as the State Department was concerned.

So we went to Russia. But there was a little fly in the ointment – almost. We told them that I had to have a record of where I was going to be, and who I was talking to in Russia. We took off on the 10th of December, 1972.

Alec Meresev was the head of this (Russian) veterans group I was meeting; he was the spokesman. He was a pilot shot down over the Black Forest, and when he landed, it crushed both his feet. And he crawled out of that Black Forest in the snow. It took him several days.

We had our interpreter with us, and they had their interpreter. The first sentence this guy spat out was, "What are you doing in Vietnam?" I flared up for a minute, then I realized this is no time to get into a yelling match. And I said, "Comrade, we're over here as simple soldiers who were both in a war. Now, some people in our countries are trying to establish a better relationship, and if you and I stand here today, tomorrow and the next day, and hurl accusations at each other, we're not going to gain a thing."

He thought for a minute, and he said, "Comrade, you are right." And he never said another word (about Vietnam).

Never was I disgracefully received by any of them, except one guy who'd had too much to drink. He started popping off about the United States. The next thing you know, he had to go to the bathroom, and then he forgot his way back.

Going over (to Leningrad) on the train was one of the most interesting trips I'd ever made. We'd pass little villages, and I thought, "My God! I'm in Russia." So we got into Leningrad and they're so close to Finland that they were much more Westernized. You could get a decent meal and so forth. In Moscow, the food was lousy. The only good thing I found out about Moscow was that they heated their towels.

Q: *What effect do you think that meeting had?*
A: The first time I made a full-blown speech about that, I was out in Los Angeles. They had a banquet with the California governor there, the mayor of Los Angeles, a lot of the bigwigs. And I gave a speech on this (trip to the Soviet Union). At the end of it, I told them I didn't know whether we did good or did harm. Time will tell. But I said, "I'm going to get the Legion to invite a group from Russia to come over and see how we do things." And they did, a couple of years later.

Q: *What was it like to be national commander during the war protests?*
A: The Legion was very upset. It was about that time that our president gave amnesty to all those guys who went to Canada. It was an unhappy time. I was speaking in Rhode Island at a banquet, and the local newspaper sent a man down to interview me, and he didn't know a thing about The American Legion.

So I said, "Have you got half an hour to spare?" And he said, "Yeah."

"Would you listen to me tell you about The American Legion for 30 minutes?"

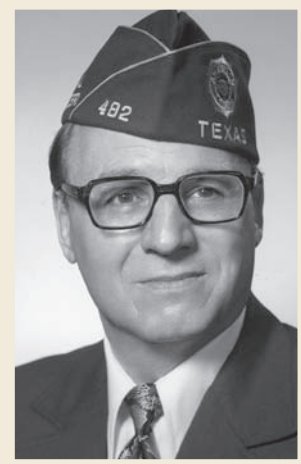
"Yeah, I'll listen."

I told him about The American Legion, what it had done, what it was built on, what it believed in, what it advocated, what it did for the veterans, what it did for the country. I got the nicest write-up in that paper the next day. I was shocked to death.

The Legion's made a few mistakes and it'll make some in the future. But basically, we're one of the strongest organizations in the United States, and that's why I've stayed active in it.

Q: *Baseball is one of The American Legion's strongest youth programs. Do you have any stories about Legion Baseball?*
A: This was about '49 or '50. We had good American Legion junior baseball down in Fort Worth. So another guy and I decided that we were going to get a car and raffle it off to raise money for junior baseball. So we got a Ford car and, during the seventh-inning stretch of a game, we gave it away. I was master of ceremonies, and I reached into the barrel to pull the (winning) ticket out, and it was for a guy by the name of "Matthews."

I had nothing else I could do but repeat the name. And you know, half those people out there probably figured it was a relative of mine. But the old boy who won it was a butcher, and his car was sitting out in his back yard, up on cement blocks because he'd sold the wheels off of it. A guy won a car who really, really needed it.



Joe Matthews in 1972

Q: *If young veterans returning from overseas came up to you and asked why they should join The American Legion, what would you say?*
A: I'd tell them that The American Legion got most of the laws (passed) that protect them today. You know, veterans of World War I were shabbily treated. It wasn't from ill will; it was because we just didn't understand what was going to happen, and how poorly they were going to be paid for their service.

My wife and I were down on a Caribbean cruise a while ago. And we met a couple there, and got to talking. The man said he'd gone to college on the GI Bill. I asked him if he knew who got him the GI Bill.

"Yes, the Congress of the United States got it for us."

I said, "The American Legion got it for you!" I told him about The American Legion, because Harry Colmery wrote that bill. I've probably got as much respect for him as anybody I ever met.

Q: *Is it true that you once had lunch with President Truman?*
A: I was in Kansas at the department convention. Truman was one of the speakers, and I was one of the speakers. Truman spoke first, and when he finished, the department commander got up and thanked him. And a man talked him into staying while I spoke.

So I had my speech, and then they called Truman back up to thank him for being there, and thank him for the good speech, and he took the microphone and said, "Joe Matthews made the best speech here this morning."

Then, about half an hour later, a man came down from (Truman's) suite and asked us if we'd like to have lunch with him – Don Johnson and I, both of us candidates for national commander in the future. Of course, we said yes.

– Philip M. Callaghan

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FOR LUCK

Veterans swear their charms and rituals protected them at war.

BY HARVEY MEYER

No Academy Award-winning actor could match George Leffingwell's performance on a bone-chilling night during the Korean War. His acting, along with an assist from his lucky-charm bracelet, literally saved his life.

Bleeding and wracked with pain from shrapnel and small-arms fire as four Chinese soldiers approached, Leffingwell reckoned his best chance for survival was to play dead. As the enemy examined his body on the flat, frozen ground, he stared straight ahead. The private first class knew that many in combat died with their eyes open.

One Chinese soldier bent down next to Leffingwell's face in the pitch darkness to listen for breathing. Convinced he was either mortally wounded or dead, the soldiers stripped him of his wallet, trench knife, high-school class ring and wrist bracelet – and left.

Especially dispiriting was the loss of his bracelet. A few days earlier, Leffingwell had received it from his fiancée, Kathy, in a Valentine's Day package. The gold-plated bracelet bore with his Army serial number the date "2-14-53," and the words "Love, Kathy" and "Leffie" – her nickname for him.

Throughout the night, Leffingwell lapsed in and out of consciousness. When daylight came, he struggled to walk on his frostbitten feet. Finally, a U.S. patrol spotted him and whisked him to surgery. Doctors there told him he'd lucked out; the plummeting temperature helped him survive by causing his blood to congeal.

Leffingwell returned to the United States with an honorable discharge, a Purple Heart and two Bronze Stars. He spent months in recovery. Soon after his Oct. 18, 1953, wedding to Kathy, the Army – with no explanation – sent him a package containing the bracelet. Leffingwell concluded that U.S. soldiers discovered it on a dead Chinese soldier, and somehow traced it back to him.

"It was a miracle I survived that night, enduring the cold weather and the wounds I had," Leffingwell said. Today, he lives in Bristol, R.I., a father of three and grandfather of six. "I kind of think the bracelet helped me stay alive. What else could it be?"

Soldiers through the ages have relied on good-luck charms and superstitious rituals to help them survive the horrors of war. In World War II, an ace fighter pilot reportedly flew with a trusty black cat named Sinbad in his cockpit. Some soldiers refused to change their underwear or shave their mustaches.

A Vietnam War veteran and his Desert Storm-era son donned lucky scarlet socks, enduring razzing from fellow soldiers. And in Afghanistan and Iraq, soldiers have toted a variety of good-luck charms: a grandfather's dog tags, the ultrasound image of a child, a scorched teddy bear.

For many, carrying a charm or practicing a ritual offers a measure of control over chaotic circumstances. Rational or not, they believe it contributes to a sense of order, enabling them to be masters of their own destiny.

Apparently, many Americans can relate. A 1996 Gallup poll showed that more than half of Americans consider themselves at least somewhat superstitious (Gallup hasn't polled the issue since then).

Joe Settimio's father gave him a gold ring with a ruby setting before his son left to serve in World War II. The Army buck private wore the ring on his left hand during the 1944-1945 Philippines campaign.

"I heard stories where the Japanese would cut off fingers or hands to take rings or other items," said Settimio, a member of Emery Watson American Legion Post 45 in Follansbee, W.Va. "Many times, I wondered if that would happen to my finger. I thought the ring would be a kind of lucky charm for me."

Settimio suffered from dermatitis in the jungle and was evacuated back to the United States. When he married, he replaced the ring with a wedding band. The ring now sits in a treasure box.

"Many times, I was in battle and thinking of my father and family," said Settimio, now 83.

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"The ring was probably as helpful to me as anything to help me survive."

During Desert Storm in 1991, Rob "Sarge" Robinson and other members of his small Marine Corps reconnaissance team offered a simple tribute before deploying: "Remember George!" The phrase was a reminder of how George Washington led a ragtag group of Americans in the Revolution to prevail against the world's most powerful nation.

And while that ritual provided inspiration, it was a pocket watch that motivated Robinson to endure sometimes hellish conditions, starting with his service in Vietnam. His grandfather, a World War I pilot he affectionately called "Pop," handed him the watch before Robinson left for southeast Asia, solemnly telling him, "I'm going to trust you to return it home to me."

Robinson always carried the watch in his left thigh pocket. He rubbed the watch's stucco-like exterior with his thumb for comfort during firefights and while recovering from battlefield injuries.

"The watch gave me the extra strength to survive when all else seemed bad and lost," Robinson said. "With one injury from which I was bleeding profusely, I reached down and grabbed (the watch) while I was on the battlefield and said, 'Pop, I swear to God I'm going to bring this back to you.'"

Although his grandfather died while Robinson was in Vietnam, the watch continued to give him comfort when he deployed during Desert Storm and elsewhere. As a member of a five-man advance team that stealthily identified targets for bomber pilots or unmanned missiles, he once hid underneath a Baghdad house while enemy troops searched above. Had they discovered him, Robinson believes they would have tortured and killed him.

"Physically, I was all by myself, but my grandfather was always with me," said Robinson, an American Legion Rider and member of Post 178 in Augusta, Ga.

Today, the watch's stucco finish has been rubbed smooth. Robinson still carries it in his front pants pocket.

Ed Abbey duct-taped a 3-by-5 color photo of his then-fiancée, Leila, to the lower right corners of the Humvees he rambled in during his 2004-2005 Iraq tour. "She had a smile you could lose yourself in," gushed Abbey, commander of an Army tactical movement team that frequently journeyed outside the wire.

And while Abbey endured good-natured teasing about the prominently-placed picture of Leila, now his wife, he believes it helped protect him. His Humvees were tagged five times by IEDs, and his head was struck with shrapnel – but he survived.

He never discussed the photo's good-fortune properties.

"If it was bringing you good luck and you discussed it, you could jinx it, so why bring it up?" said Abbey, sergeant at arms for American Legion Post 647 in Alameda, Calif. "It's like car insurance. You buy it, but you hope you never have to use it."

Unlike many soldiers who relied on one charm to bless them during wartime, Ben Williams chose a more-the-merrier approach during his tour in Vietnam. The Marine Corps pilot kept a flechette round in his utility cover; around his neck he wore a smoke-grenade ring and pin, a pewter crucifix from his uncle, and stainless-steel medallions from loved ones.

"Knowing I had these medallions from the people who loved and respected me gave me some feeling of connection to them," said Williams, a member of Post 291 in Newport Beach, Calif. He received three Distinguished Flying Crosses for heroism and other awards.

Williams needed all the good fortune he could muster during some dangerous missions, including one evening when his helicopter – low on fuel – lost its generators. Enduring small-arms fire and flying only with flashlights in overcast weather, Williams landed the craft, whisking seven Marines to safety. Later, he retrieved a pregnant Vietnamese woman who had been beaten and raped.

Reflecting on his menagerie of medallions, Williams said, "Maybe they were my receptors from God, the entry and exit points of the spirit. When I had them on, it almost felt like I had my armor on – my spiritual armor."

Harvey Meyer is a writer who lives in St. Louis Park, Minn. He contributes to general interest, consumer, business and higher-education magazines.

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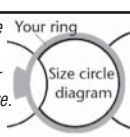

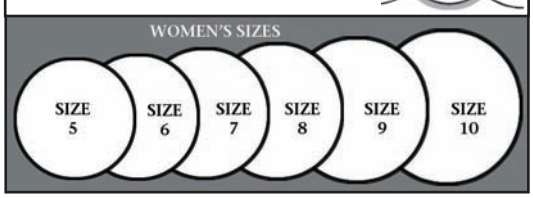

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LEGIONNAIRES: THE FIRST GENERATION

John Stelle

His efforts helped convince Congress to pass the GI Bill.

When President Franklin Roosevelt finally signed the GI Bill into law June 22, 1944, John Stelle must have breathed a huge sigh of relief. He'd spent six months camped out in Washington, convincing politicians that it was in their best interest to help the nation's veterans back into the civilian world.

As head of The American Legion's special committee on the GI Bill, Stelle played a pivotal, behind-the-scenes role that usually escaped the media spotlight. His efforts helped secure college educations and home loans for millions of veterans in postwar America.

Put another way, Stelle belonged to a group of Legionnaires whose perseverance led to one of the greatest pieces of legislation ever passed. The GI Bill democratized higher education, helped build the suburbs, and made the United States a prosperous nation with global financial clout.

The year after Stelle shepherded the GI Bill through Congress, he was elected the Legion's national commander by unanimous vote at the Chicago convention.

In his acceptance speech, Stelle said, "There is now in the making the greatest team ever developed in the peacetime history of the world: a team of veterans of World War I and World War II in The American Legion.

"As commander, it will be my objective to make this a winning team – an aggressive team – a team which has fought and won on the battlefields of war and which will continue to fight and win in the battles of peace ...."

Regardless of when or where troops fought, Stelle believed all veterans had two values in common: taking care of their disabled comrades and preserving the American way of life. Wounded and gassed in combat on the Western Front, Stelle was acutely aware that many veterans returning home from France were unable to take care of themselves. And their numbers were small compared to the enormous wave of veterans from World War II.

Stelle knew all about duty and sacrifice on the battlefield. His own son, John Albert, was wounded in the Army's breakthrough at St. Lo, France, in July 1944. His other son, Russell, earned the Distinguished Flying Cross as a P-51 Mustang pilot.

Perhaps it was his thorough understanding of duty and sacrifice in wartime that fueled Stelle's six-month battle in the halls of Congress, navigating complicated political waters in Washington.

When the Legion's fight for the GI Bill had finally been won, Stelle said of the victory: "I can look the returning boys in the eye now, and sincerely say that we have fulfilled our duty to provide them with every opportunity that it is within our power to provide."

– Philip M. Callaghan

The dossier

Born in McLeansboro, Hamilton County, Ill., on Aug. 10, 1892.

Education: Western Military Academy, Alton, Ill.; law degree, Washington University, St. Louis.

Married Wilma Wiseheart of Shawneetown, Ill., on Nov. 30, 1912.

Played professional baseball in the Kitty League, as shortstop for the 1916 team in Owensboro, Ky.

Enlisted in the U.S. Army on April 17, 1917. Served in France with 30th "Old Hickory" Infantry Division; discharged with rank of captain.

Helped organize American Legion Post 106 in McLeansboro and several other Illinois posts.

Elected Illinois state treasurer in 1932 and lieutenant governor in 1936; served as governor 1938-1941.

Business interests included oil, manufacturing and dairy products.

His two sons, Russell and John Albert, served in World War II.

Died at Barnes Hospital in St. Louis, on July 6, 1962, at age 69.

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[MEMBERSHIP]

American Legion Day, Sept. 16, center of national campaign

Rep. Deborah L. Halvorson, D-Ill., introduced H. Res. 679 on July 24, calling on the nation to observe American Legion Day on Sept. 16, the date in 1919 when the organization received its federal charter. The first American Legion Day will also trigger a three-month "Legiontown USA" campaign to recognize communities where posts play an important role.

"Every year, members of The American Legion donate thousands of hours of community service in veterans medical facilities and homes to care for our nation's heroes," Halvorson said. "They also sponsor many youth organizations, donate millions of dollars in college scholarships, and provide a high level of service to our nation's youth."

The resolution already had 26 co-sponsors in late July, she said.

To assist posts in planning their own American Legion Day event, the new booklet "Legiontown, USA" offers ideas for activities during the campaign.

To order, e-mail **pr@legion.org** or call **(317) 630-1253.**

[MEMBERSHIP]

New Legion posts

Casco Memorial Post 215, Casco, Maine: Chartered July 7 *(15 members)*

Santee Sioux Warriors Post 368, Santee, Neb.: Chartered July 7 *(19 members)*

Floyds Post 118, Nichols, S.C.: Chartered June 25 *(25 members)*

Post 114, Sargent, Texas: Chartered July 7 *(14 members)*

[MEMBERSHIP]

Reborn from Katrina's wrath

Officers raise Old Glory outside Post 77's new building at a dedication ceremony in March. James V. Carroll

The smell of money

Sifting through the rubble left behind by Hurricane Katrina in 2005, Raymond Cuevas found little to salvage from American Legion Post 77.

"Everything of value was gone," says Cuevas, who was serving as post commander when the storm hit. "Even our heavy floor safe, containing more than $6,000, was nowhere to be found. Katrina had blown or floated it away to who knew where. I thought I'd never see the safe or the money again."

He was wrong. Nearly three months

In the early morning hours of Aug. 29, 2005, Raymond Cuevas hoped for the best and feared the worst. Hurricane Katrina was headed straight for the Gulf Coast and was expected to hit Waveland, Miss., and American Legion Post 77.

Cuevas, the post commander, and his fellow Legionnaires had done all they could to prepare for the hurricane. In the end, their efforts were for naught.

At least 1,900 people lost their lives in the hurricane; nearly 250 were Mississippi residents. Katrina caused $81 billion in damages.

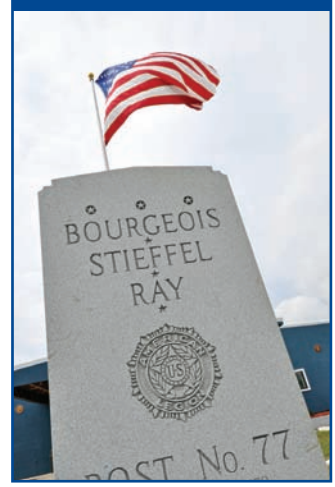
When Cuevas returned to Waveland, what he found – or rather, what he didn't find – shocked him. "I couldn't believe my eyes," he said, remembering his first look at the devastated coastline. "Whole neighborhoods were gone – nothing left. It was difficult to find my way around. Most of the street signs and local landmarks were swept away. Streets and bridges were destroyed. It was terrible. It was overwhelming. Everything was gone."

Cuevas made his way to the waterfront and saw that Post 77 had vanished. All that remained of the 13,000 square-foot building was a concrete slab, twisted steel beams, a granite monument and a flagpole. Gone was the post safe, containing more than $6,000 in cash and checks.

With their Legion home on Colman Avenue completely destroyed, Cuevas wondered what that meant for Post 77's 350 members.

"We all were worried about the future, but we knew that, some way or another, we would rebuild," he said.

Waveland, Miss., Post 77 members were resilient in their efforts to rebuild.



Back on Their Feet. Knowing it would be too expensive and impractical to construct a new post on their waterfront property, members of Post 77 opted to relocate a few blocks inland. In the interim, they met in a tent.

In June 2007, Post 77 Legionnaires and Auxiliary members – along with Waveland officials – broke ground for a new building. The post celebrated the opening of its new home last March.

"It's taken us quite a while, but we are back on our feet," Post 77's current commander, Russell Voorhies, told the crowd. Guests traveled from as far away as Massachusetts and New Jersey.

"It's taken a collective effort by folks near and far to rebuild," he said. "We could not have done this without cooperation and assistance by our community leaders and neighbors. We thank them from the bottom of our hearts."

Post 77 has always supported Waveland, and the community has reciprocated, said Voorhies, who took Past National Commander Thomas Cadmus and Mississippi Department Commander Steve Sweet on a tour of the ruins.

Cadmus was the last national commander to visit Post 77 before Katrina destroyed it. "It's mind-boggling to see the devastation still evident along the coast," he said. "At the same time, it's amazing to see how Legionnaires of Post 77 and other coastal posts have rebounded. It is a testament to the 'can-do' attitude Legionnaires exhibit when faced with adversity. I am in awe."

Voorhies agreed. "There remains a great amount of work to be done to restore Waveland and the rest of the Gulf Coast," he said. "Post 77 is but one little cog in the wheel. But we Legionnaires will do our part to assist our community to rebound, in the same way the community stepped forward in our effort to rebuild. It's who we are."

– James V. Carroll

to the day after Katrina raged through Waveland and the Gulf Coast, Cuevas spotted a chunk of metal at a tree line about 100 yards behind the former post's site. It was the missing safe.

"The handle and dial had been torn off, so we had to use a blowtorch to open the safe," Cuevas says. "The money was inside, but so was soupy, slimy mud. Boy, was it a stinky mess!"

He spent weeks laundering cash – literally – in a bucket of water in his back yard. Bill by bill, he recovered the profits from Post 77's bingo games.

"My wife wasn't too thrilled with my money-laundering effort, because I used her kitchen floor as a drying surface," Cuevas said. "The ladies at the bank where I took the washed cash weren't too happy with me, either."

[VERBATIM]

"Bowe, if you see this, know that we love you and we are praying fervently for you."

Tim Baker, a family friend of Army Pfc. Bowe Bergdahl, speaking to CNN affiliate KVTB in the soldier's hometown of Ketchum, Idaho, on July 20. Taliban forces kidnapped Bergdahl on June 30 in southeastern Afghanistan's Paktika province.

"Sometimes I think I flew to the wrong place. Mars was always my favorite as a kid, and it still is today. I'd like to see Mars become the focus, just as John F. Kennedy focused on the moon."

Michael Collins, Apollo 11 command module pilot, speaking at the National Air and Space Museum on the eve of the 40th anniversary of the first manned moon landing

"What was so remarkable about it was that he was not only in the midst of so many great stories, he was also the managing editor of CBS News and the managing editor for America. Walter always made us better. He set the bar so high."

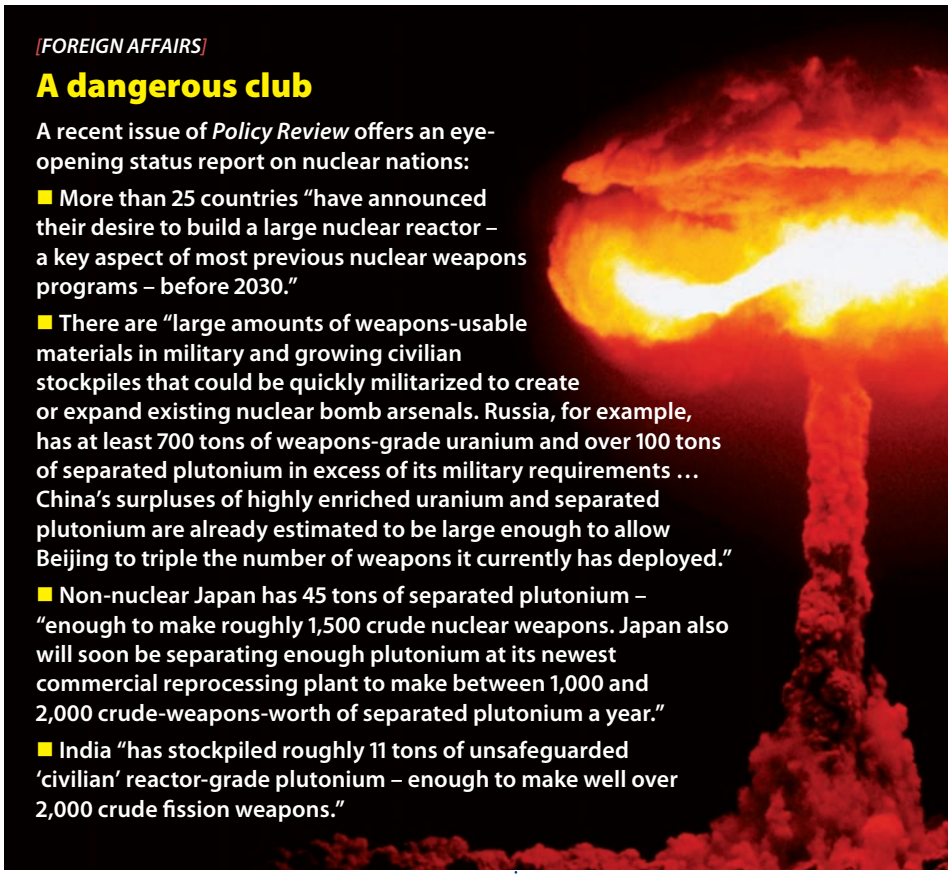
Tom Brokaw, former NBC News anchor, on Walter Cronkite, who died July 17 at 92

"Obviously, it is not our preference to have a force that is using tobacco products."

Geoff Morrell, Pentagon spokesman, on the government's decision to allow soldiers to smoke despite a report commissioned by VA and the Pentagon that recommended the U.S. military be smoke-free

[FOREIGN AFFAIRS]

A dangerous club



A recent issue of *Policy Review* offers an eye-opening status report on nuclear nations:

- **More than 25 countries "have announced their desire to build a large nuclear reactor – a key aspect of most previous nuclear weapons programs – before 2030."**
- **There are "large amounts of weapons-usable materials in military and growing civilian stockpiles that could be quickly militarized to create or expand existing nuclear bomb arsenals. Russia, for example, has at least 700 tons of weapons-grade uranium and over 100 tons of separated plutonium in excess of its military requirements … China's surpluses of highly enriched uranium and separated plutonium are already estimated to be large enough to allow Beijing to triple the number of weapons it currently has deployed."**
- **Non-nuclear Japan has 45 tons of separated plutonium – "enough to make roughly 1,500 crude nuclear weapons. Japan also will soon be separating enough plutonium at its newest commercial reprocessing plant to make between 1,000 and 2,000 crude-weapons-worth of separated plutonium a year."**
- **India "has stockpiled roughly 11 tons of unsafeguarded 'civilian' reactor-grade plutonium – enough to make well over 2,000 crude fission weapons."**

[WAR ON TERROR]

No news is good news

You won't read it in the morning paper or see it on the evening news, but the U.S. military has dramatically – and perhaps irreversibly – turned the corner in Iraq, as the nonpartisan Brookings Institution details in its Iraq Index:

- Iraq rates fourth in the region in political freedom, behind Israel, Lebanon and Morocco.
- Under Saddam Hussein, there were no commercial TV stations and no independent newspapers; by 2006 there were 54 commercial TV stations and 268 independent newspapers and magazines.
- Pre-war Iraq had just 833,000 telephone subscribers; today there are 17.7 million cellular and 1.3 million landline phone subscribers.
- Attacks on energy installations and personnel have fallen from 30 per month in late 2004 to one per month in 2009.
- The size of Iraq's security forces has grown from 30,000 in mid-2003 to 589,000 in late 2008.
- Monthly U.S. troop fatalities that once were as high as 137 now are in the single digits and low teens.

www.brookings.edu/saban/iraq-index.aspx

[MILITARY AFFAIRS]

Bunker busters

As North Korea flirts with war, *Wired* magazine reports that the Pentagon "is stepping up efforts to neutralize hardened bunkers" by developing new bombs "five times as strong as the current models by the end of the year, and 10 times more powerful by 2013."

The new ordnance will be delivered by B-52s, B-2s and F-15Es.

[WAR ON TERROR]

Did you know?

According to *USA Today*, the Pentagon reports that at least eight Iraqis who fled their homeland and sought refuge in America during the war have returned to Iraq as members of the U.S. Armed Forces.

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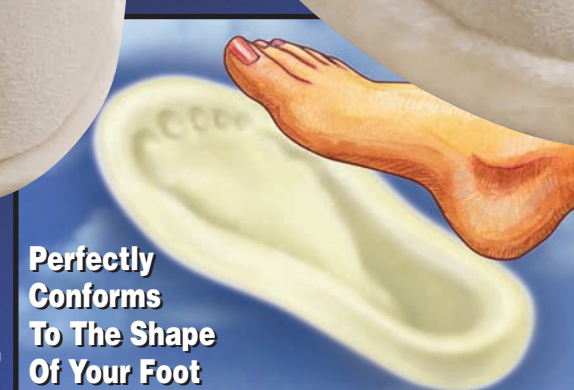

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[STATEMENT]

“While The American Legion appreciates the complexity of the health-care reform challenge facing the president and Congress, on behalf of our nation’s 26 million veterans and the nearly 2 million personnel now on active duty in more than 130 countries, we urge Congress to ensure that veterans and military health care not be part of any national health-care bill. They should be exempt in the legislation.

“Ensuring timely access to quality health care for today’s military and veterans is of paramount concern. These are the citizens who have borne our battles in previous wars as they still are in Iraq and Afghanistan. They have earned our care the hard way. We, as a nation, have an obligation to ensure that their health care is not compromised.”

American Legion National Commander David K. Rehbein,
reacting to President Barack Obama’s urgent call for national health-care reform July 23

A Westboro Baptist Church member protests outside the funeral of an Army corporal in Michigan. AP

[WAR ON TERROR]

Constitutional abuse raises Legion’s ire

“Tipping the scales of justice – even a little bit – is wrong,” said American Legion National Commander David K. Rehbein, reacting to legal actions filed on behalf of Westboro Baptist Church in Topeka, Kan. Fred Phelps, the church’s founder, and his followers insist that God is punishing the United States with the deaths of American soldiers for the country’s allegedly lax attitude toward homosexuality. Their belief has led the church group to protest at funerals and memorial services for slain warriors, carrying placards that say “Thank God For Dead Soldiers” and other offensive phrases.

“It is clearly their constitutional right to challenge any law that infringes on First Amendment rights,” Rehbein said. “But what about the rights of our fallen heroes, their families and friends? I want everyone to know that The American Legion will continue to fight for the rights of those who paid the ultimate sacrifice, as well as their survivors and friends as they pay their final respects.”

Reports say the American Civil Liberties Union is challenging a Maplewood, Mo., statute restricting demonstrations like the ones staged by Phelps’ people. The ACLU says the restriction is too broad and violates the First Amendment.

Christina Wells of the Missouri School of Law suggests that recent legislation enacted in response to such protests may restrict a broad range of expressive activities. “The instinct to regulate or punish is powerful and understandable,” Wells said. “Such regulation, however, poses significant issues for freedom of speech. Our outrage shouldn’t overshadow reasoned legal response.”

Rehbein said he hopes that the ACLU will “join with The American Legion – and the vast majority of Americans – who believe the privacy rights of fallen heroes, their families and friends should be protected and preserved as they are allowed to mourn and grieve without wanton harassment.”

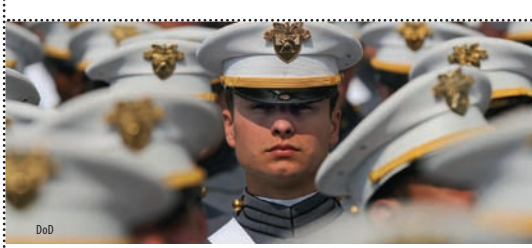
[ECONOMICS]

Bad checks

Of the millions of stimulus checks being sent to Social Security beneficiaries, an estimated 10,000 are going to people who are deceased.

As Baltimore NBC affiliate WBAL TV reports, one of those bad checks was mailed to Rose Hagner, who died in 1967. Her son, who is 83, told the station the check brought shock and laughter “all at the same time.”

The Social Security Administration blames the problem on a tight deadline to mail all the $250 checks by mid-June.



DoD

[MILITARY AFFAIRS]

Service academy applications soar

AP is reporting a spike in applications to the U.S. Military, Naval and Air Force academies, with Annapolis reporting a 40-percent increase in applications compared to 2008. Annapolis received about 15,300 applications for about 1,230 positions, which is the highest number of applications the academy has received since 1988. Applications are up 10 percent at the Air Force Academy and 9 percent at West Point.

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[CHILDREN & YOUTH]

COTA newest partner of American Legion

In May, The American Legion's National Executive Committee passed a resolution adopting the Children's Organ Transplant Association as an official program. COTA is a national charity that provides fundraising assistance for children needing life-saving transplants.

"Although the resolution formalizes the relationship between The American Legion and COTA, we have a long history of working together to improve the lives of children," said Dennis Boland, chairman of the Legion's National Commission on Children & Youth.

Since 1989, The American Legion has provided more than $250,000 in grants to COTA. "Even in those cases where a transplant patient has insurance to cover the transplant procedure, most insurance plans require a family to pay a deductible, which can be $10,000 or more annually," Boland said. "There are many other transplant-related expenses that COTA helps transplant families to manage. This is where the Legion family can help transplant families nationwide."

1-800-366-2682, www.cota.org

[MEMBERSHIP]

Why I love my Legion post

Why do you love your American Legion post? The American Legion wants to know.

In 200 to 300 words, tell us what your post is doing that keeps you fired up and renewing your membership dues each year. Let us know about your post's programs and the success stories associated with them. Your stories will begin appearing in future issues of *The Dispatch*, *The American Legion Magazine* and *The American Legion Online Update*.

Send your submissions, along with any related photos, to ***legionnews@legion.org.***

[INTERVIEW]

TO HONOR. TO CURE.

Former Delta Force member joins fight against prostate cancer.

Retired Command Sgt. Maj. Eric Haney has seen his firsthand book "Inside Delta Force: The Story of America's Elite Counterterrorist Unit" inspire the hit TV program "The Unit." A writer and executive producer for the show, he is also a spokesman for Theragenics Corp., a medical device company serving the surgical products and cancer-treatment markets. The "To Honor. To Cure" campaign aims to educate men about their options when faced with prostate cancer. Haney also participates in Theragenics-sponsored Honor Flights for World War II veterans and their families.

Q: *Why is prostate cancer awareness important to you?*
A: I've had a number of my friends – Vietnam-veteran age – who've been diagnosed with prostate cancer. It's something that I've known through VA studies and other medical studies, that the incidence of prostate cancer is twice the national incidence among Vietnam War veterans. We've reached that time of our life when it's something that's on our radar.

Q: *Why is it important to tie this to the Honor Flights program?*
A: My father's a World War II veteran, and all the men I looked up to growing up – uncles and neighbors and friends in our community, within our church, in our schools – were World War II veterans. We're losing those men at a rapid rate now. So the opportunity for these flights to get as many veterans to Washington, D.C., to visit the World War II Memorial and other memorials … is something that's very precious.

Q: *You've been on flights with the World War II veterans. What's that like?*
A: I tell them that this is like Burger King: "You have it your way today. It's celebrating you." We see that when the vets and their families arrive at the airport. The employees go all out for them. There are signs. People are cheering them when they get on the plane. Always the local news is present.

And then the same thing when we arrive in Washington, D.C, that grand reception. People line up on either side of the terminal gate, forming a corridor, through which these veterans pass. They're cheering. They're clapping. I've come through and seen people weeping. These are just passengers who happen to be there, and they realize what's going on and who these men and women are, the veterans. It's a very moving experience.

By the time we get back on the plane, it's a tired bunch. But it's a happy bunch. And what I think of is that, for many of them, if we'd waited a year to make that trip, they wouldn't have made it.

www.honorflight.org • www.tohonortocure.com

Read more of Haney's interview in the July 30 issue of *The American Legion Online Update*:
www.legion.org/whatsnew/publications/newsletter

[LEGION RIDERS]

Alabama Legion Riders raise $21,000 for Camp Sam

Every year, American Legion Riders Chapter 107 in Leeds, Ala., hits the road to raise money for Camp Smile-a-Mile (Camp "Sam"), Alabama's facility for children with cancer. Last year, the Riders donated $10,000, and doubled that in 2009 with a final tally of $21,295.

Jamie Levin, Chapter 107's treasurer, said there wasn't a dry eye in camp. "One girl said, 'I'm thankful that I'm not bald anymore.' Then she took off her hat and said, 'Look at all this hair!' I could go on and on and never fully explain the range of emotions you feel."

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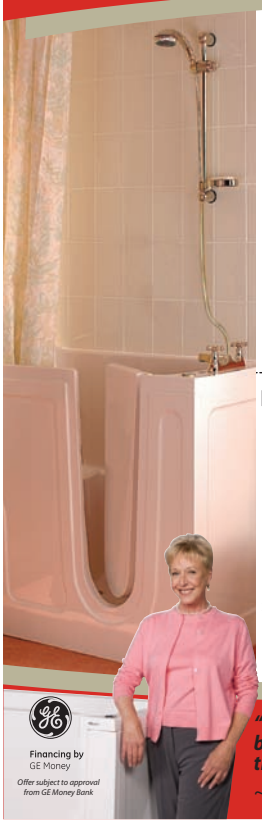

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[HISTORY]

Battleship *Missouri* to drydock at Pearl Harbor

As early as October, the "Mighty Mo" will become one of the largest ships to ever be drydocked at Pearl Harbor Naval Shipyard.

The 887-foot battleship *Missouri*, site of Japan's unconditional surrender that ended World War II, will undergo extensive maintenance and preservation work in Pearl Harbor's largest drydock – the 1,100-foot-long Drydock No. 4 – for up to three months.

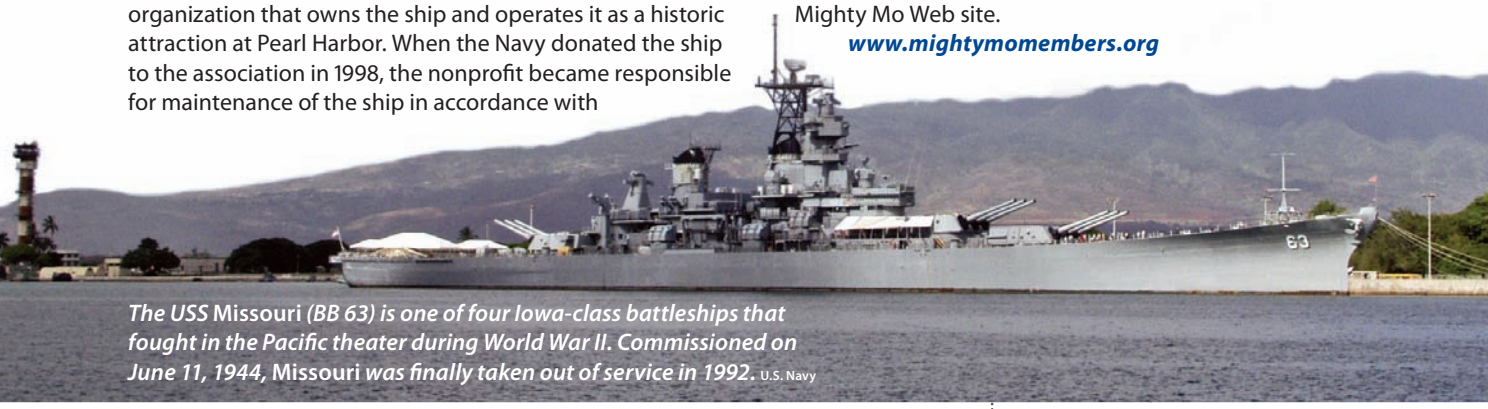
"Since the Battleship *Missouri* Memorial opened 10 years ago, no longer has a visit to Pearl Harbor been complete without stepping aboard the 'Mighty Mo' and walking the deck where defeat was turned to victory," said Michael Carr, president and chief operating officer of the USS *Missouri* Memorial Association, Inc., a Hawaii-based nonprofit organization that owns the ship and operates it as a historic attraction at Pearl Harbor. When the Navy donated the ship to the association in 1998, the nonprofit became responsible for maintenance of the ship in accordance with Navy matériel standards. Pre-drydock cleaning, inspection and preparation will begin while the memorial remains open to tours. *Missouri* will be closed to the public during the drydocking period of two to three months.

Soon after the memorial's annual Sept. 2 ceremony commemorating the anniversary of the end of World War II, *Missouri* is scheduled to depart from its home for the past decade – Pier Foxtrot-5 – and be towed just over two miles across Pearl Harbor to Drydock No. 4.

In drydock, restoration work will include sand blasting, hull inspection and any needed repairs, followed by preservation treatment.

For the latest updates about drydocking, follow *Missouri* on Twitter at @USSMissouri and visit the Friends of the Mighty Mo Web site.

www.mightymomembers.org



The USS Missouri *(BB 63) is one of four Iowa-class battleships that fought in the Pacific theater during World War II. Commissioned on June 11, 1944,* Missouri *was finally taken out of service in 1992.* U.S. Navy

[HONOR]

Civil War soldiers finally rest in peace

Discovered two years ago in graves unearthed at a construction site, the remains of 61 Civil War-era veterans and three civilians were reinterred at Southern Arizona Veterans Memorial Cemetery in Sierra Vista, Ariz., May 16. The caskets were escorted along their route by American Legion Riders, the Arizona Highway Patrol, U.S. Border Patrol and other patriotic groups.

Amy L. Patchell

A memorial ceremony honored 22 California volunteers who fought during the Civil War, and 39 regular Army troops who served at various times between 1866 and 1881. The remains included those of three Army Indian scouts and one unknown Civil War veteran from the U.S. Colored Troops.

Soldiers from nearby Fort Huachuca helped carry the troops' remains – in small, U.S. flag-draped coffins – to a ceremonial staging area. Arizona's official balladeer, Dolan Ellis, sang "Amazing Grace," and Joe Joaquin said a prayer in his native Indian language. The 4th Cavalry Regimental Band provided music for the memorial ceremony, which was hosted by the Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War.

[ECONOMICS]

Making history

The Heritage Foundation recently answered the question "Would President Obama's budget plan really increase deficit spending much more than other modern presidents?" with an emphatic yes. Here's how Obama's deficit spending compares to his predecessors *(spending measured as a percentage of economic output):*

Kennedy	-1 percent
Johnson	-0.9 percent
Nixon	-1.6 percent
Ford	-3.5 percent
Carter	-2.4 percent
Reagan	-4.3 percent
Bush	-4.3 percent
Clinton	-0.1 percent
Bush	-3.2 percent
Obama	-7.3 percent

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[AMERICANISM]

Boys Nation elects 2009 leadership

Christopher Andrews, 17, of Green River, Wyo., was elected president of American Legion Boys Nation at Marymount University in Arlington, Va., July 21. An incoming senior at Green River High School, Andrews plans to attend Michigan State University to study math and science.

"It is an honor and privilege to be elected," Andrews said. "I thank The American Legion and Boys State for this opportunity."

Kyle Gaines, 17, of Ormond Beach, Fla., was elected Boys Nation vice president. He plans to attend Georgetown University and pursue a career with the Central Intelligence Agency.

[PATRIOTISM]

Miss America 2009 praises Legion, troops

Miss America 2009 Katie Stam recently stopped by The American Legion National Headquarters in Indianapolis to talk about her visit with U.S. troops in Germany.

The 22-year-old from Seymour, Ind., has family and friends who served in the military. But Stam says she "never truly got it" until she spent time with wounded soldiers, and has appreciated meeting servicemembers, veterans and their families during her tenure as Miss America: "It's all about honoring our servicemen and women. It's all about celebrating them and their stories – who they are, and what they've done for our country."

A communications major at the University of Indianapolis, Katie Stam is the national goodwill ambassador for Children's Miracle Network. James V. Carroll

Stam also applauded The American Legion's work on behalf of troops and veterans, and its community-service programs. The Legion "is definitely going to be an organization that I'll continue working with," she said.

A former TV news anchor for the University of Indianapolis, Stam says press outlets could do a better job covering the military: "I wish the media could connect and really tell the stories of the soldiers, so that more people could experience what I feel so tremendously blessed to have experienced."

Watch Stam's video interview in the June 4 issue of *The American Legion Online Update:* **www.legion.org/whatsnew/publications/newsletter**

[EDUCATION]

Active time determines benefits

Q: *What determines how much I will receive in Post-9/11 GI Bill benefits?*

A: Chapter 33, Post-9/11 GI Bill education benefits are based on how long an honorably discharged veteran served on active duty after Sept. 10, 2001. To qualify for full benefits, a veteran must have served at least three years of active-duty service after Sept. 10, 2001.

The following chart shows the percentages of tuition, books and living allowances paid under the Post-9/11 GI Bill, which took effect Aug. 1.

TIME ON ACTIVE DUTY	PERCENTAGE OF TUITION, BOOKS AND LIVING ALLOWANCE BENEFITS
90 consecutive days	40 percent
6 cumulative months	50 percent
12 cumulative months	60 percent
18 cumulative months	70 percent
24 cumulative months	80 percent
30 cumulative months	90 percent
36 cumulative months	100 percent

Valerie Vigil, a Marine Corps veteran and member of American Legion Post 27 in Arizona, serves as vice president of the National Association of Veterans Affairs. GI Bill questions can be directed to her by e-mail. askvalerie@legion.org

[EDUCATION]

Choose GI Bill benefits carefully

If you're going to school on the Montgomery GI Bill (Chapter 30) but thinking about switching to the Post-9/11 version (Chapter 33), make sure you are making the right choice. Once you shift from Chapter 30 to Chapter 33, the change is irrevocable.

In his "What's Brewin" blog for NextGov, Bob Brewin recently wrote about a veteran friend who "signed up for the Post-9/11 bill, only to learn later that he would receive about half of the $1,300-a-month payment he would have received under the Montgomery bill."

So eligible veterans need to determine whether a full ride at a public institution is more valuable than a monthly allowance sent directly to them. For some veterans, it may be better to stay with the Montgomery GI Bill. The American Legion, Military.com and VA all have Web sites with useful information on education benefits under chapters 30 and 33.

The American Legion: *www.mygibill.org*
Military.com: *www.military.com/gi-bill-calculator*
VA: *www.gibill.va.gov*

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[VETERANS AFFAIRS]

'Best care anywhere'

Q: *How did you go about doing your research on this topic?*
A: I went to speak with people I could see were the leading lights in this movement. People at the Institute of Medicine, and Don Berwick at the Institute for Healthcare Improvement and the Harvard School of Public Health, were particularly influential. When I began talking to experts, I kept hearing this answer I couldn't believe about who might be the Jack Welch of health care. I found myself consistently pointed to what Ken Kizer did at VA in the late '90s. I began to visit VA facilities and talk with veterans and eventually had to trust the evidence with my own eyes.

Q: *Why wasn't this the story that* Fortune *wanted?*
A: This was 2003 or so, and the suggestion that the Jack Welch of health care was a government bureaucrat was, I think, just a bridge too far for them.

Q: *What sets VA apart from any other U.S. health-care system?*
A: First, it has a unique relationship with its patients. That is, it's long-term. It starts when people leave the service, and it extends to long-term nursing-home care. So as an institution, VA actually has an incentive to keep people well and to treat their conditions well, which is not really true of the rest of the health-care system. The other part that's practically unique to VA still is that starting in the 1970s, front-line employees facing very stressful working conditions had basically taken it upon themselves to begin what we today describe as electronic medical records. Having digitalized records and control systems enormously improved patient safety, improved integration of care between different specialists and, finally, created a database of results that researchers could go back, after the fact, and look at how different procedures and pills work. That's something that's almost entirely missing in the rest of the health-care system.

Q: *You advocate opening up VA to every veteran. Why?*
A: First of all, it's just a fairness issue. The Clinton administration signed legislation that basically promised everybody who joined the military that they would be eligible for lifetime VA care without any conditions. People joined the military on the strength of that promise. It turned out the actual legislation may not have made that promise, but that's what the White House press release said. So we've got a lot of veterans out there now denied benefits that they were previously promised. I don't think that's morally right.

But there's also a practical side to it. Every veteran we can get off Medicare and into the VA system not only receives higher-quality care and is more likely to have higher patient satisfaction, but the taxpayers save a substantial amount of money as well. In that case, it's a win-win.

In 2003, *Fortune* magazine asked freelance writer Phillip Longman to find someone in U.S. industry who was doing for health care what former CEO Jack Welch did while gaining a reputation as an innovative, dynamic manager who turned around General Electric. *Fortune* later killed the story, but what Longman found inspired him to write the book "Best Care Anywhere," about how former Department of Veterans Affairs Under Secretary Kenneth Kizer and other forward-thinking individuals helped transform VA into the best integrated health-care system in the United States.

Longman, a Schwartz Senior Fellow at the New America Foundation, recently spoke with *The American Legion Magazine* about his research.

Read more of Longman's interview in the May 14 issue of *The American Legion Online Update:* **www.legion.org/whatsnew/publications/newsletter**

[VETERANS AFFAIRS]

VA launches 10-year health study of OEF/OIF-era vets

VA has initiated a large, long-term study to carefully examine a broad array of health issues that may affect Operation Enduring Freedom/Operation Iraqi Freedom veterans and their contemporaries. VA's National Health Study for a New Generation of U.S. Veterans will begin with 30,000 veterans deployed to OEF/OIF and 30,000 more veterans who were not deployed.

The study will include veterans from each branch of service – active duty, reserve and National Guard. Mail surveys, online surveys, telephone interviews and in-person physical evaluations will be used to collect data.

The study will compare deployed and non-deployed veterans in terms of chronic medical conditions, traumatic brain injury, PTSD and other psychological conditions, general health perceptions, reproductive health, pregnancy outcomes, functional status, use of health care, behavioral risk factors (smoking, drinking, seat-belt use, motorcycle helmet use and sexual behavior), and VA disability compensation.

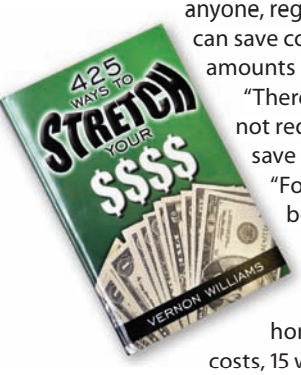
VA has contracted an independent veteran-owned research firm, HMS Technologies Inc., to collect the data. ***www.hmstech.com***

[FINANCE]

Stretch your dollars and contribute to the Legacy Fund

You can save hundreds of dollars each month *and* help pay for a college education for children of U.S. military men and women who die on active duty. That's a bold claim, but Vernon Williams is confident he can back it up in his book "425 Ways to Stretch Your $$$$."

A Vietnam War Army veteran, Williams served 13 months in Korea. After his honorable discharge in 1967, he used the Montgomery GI Bill to attend the University of Maryland. He later became a corporate executive, and for the past 16 years, Williams has spent his time as an author, speaker and seminar leader. He is third vice commander of American Legion Post 300 in Columbia, Md.



Williams says that he believes anyone, regardless of income, can save considerable amounts of money. "There are tips that do not require money to save money," he says. "For example, the book explains 23 ways a person can cut taxes, 12 ways to cut homeowner insurance costs, 15 ways to save on auto insurance, 51 ways to cut a grocery bill, and 87 ways to slash utility bills. These are expenses all of us face, and the tips in the book are proven winners."

Purchasing a copy of "425 Ways to Stretch Your $$$$" will help fund college scholarships for children who have lost a military parent on active duty since Sept. 11, 2001.

Williams is offering the eBook version of "425 Ways to Stretch Your $$$$" online for $10 to fellow Legionnaires – a 50-percent discount – and has pledged to donate $2 from each sale to The American Legion's Legacy Scholarship Fund.

www.howtocutyourexpenses.com/americanlegion.html

[CAREERS]

Pack your résumé with power verbs

To make your résumé more powerful, more inviting to read and more likely to capture an employer's attention, stay away from phrases such as "responsible for" and "duties include." Those words are boring and don't communicate any specific information. In addition, be careful that you don't overuse words such as "manage" and "supervise." Once, twice or even three times is fine; any more than that and you're overusing a word.

Instead, write your résumé using power verbs that convey action and results. Here are some favorites:

MANAGE catapult, champion, collaborate, command, control, coordinate, drive, encourage, influence, inspire, lead, leverage, mentor, motivate, navigate, orchestrate, partner, preside, shepherd, spearhead

ACCOMPLISH accelerate, achieve, advance, build, capitalize, capture, deliver, determine, dominate, earn, emphasize, empower, exceed, expand, gain, generate, launch, maximize, produce, progress, propel, rejuvenate, renew

DEVELOP assemble, conceive, conceptualize, create, design, devise, discover, engineer, establish, explore, formalize, forge, identify, imagine, initiate, innovate, invent, investigate, manufacture, pioneer, redesign, re-engineer

Wendy Enelow is co-author of "Expert Résumés for Military-to-Civilian Transitions" and "Executive Résumé Toolkit." ***www.wendyenelow.com***

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[TRIBUTE]

Freedom Rock artist offers to paint murals for Legion posts

The artist who created the famous Freedom Rock in Adair County, Iowa, wants to share his talent with even more veterans on what he calls a "Freedom Rock Tour." Assisted by corporate sponsors, Ray "Bubba" Sorenson II plans to visit American Legion posts across the country and paint murals for them.

Department of Iowa Adjutant John Derner says the Freedom Rock – a large boulder painted annually as a tribute to veterans – has quite a following among veterans and travelers. "It's become a tourist stop for those traveling along Interstate 80 and a destination for veterans nationwide," he says. "Word of the rock has circled the globe in e-mails, and the artist has been recognized for his work by several Legion departments."

Sorenson was inspired to paint his first Freedom Rock in 1999 after seeing the World War II film "Saving Private Ryan." The young artist wanted to find a way "to say 'thank you' to those who have served our great country," Derner says. "Since then, every Memorial Day, he repaints the rock with patriotic images and sayings in support of our military men and women, past and present."

Sorenson and his Freedom Rock have been featured in various media, including NBC's "Today Show." This year, the rock appeared on a special scratch ticket for the Iowa Lottery, with proceeds going to the Iowa Veterans Trust Fund.

See photos of Sorenson's artwork online at the Freedom Rock Web site: *www.thefreedomrock.com*

[REMEMBRANCE]

Wall education center planned

BY JAN C. SCRUGGS

Loyalty. Duty. Respect. Service. Honor. Integrity. Courage.

To some people, these are just words. To me, they're characteristics I saw in action every day when I served in Vietnam. These values are embodied in the men and women who answer our country's call to arms. Every day, our soldiers show us what values such as loyalty, duty, courage and service really mean.

These are at the core of exhibits planned for the Education Center at The Wall: America's Legacy of Service. Built underground on the National Mall in Washington, near the Vietnam Veterans and Lincoln memorials, this education facility will tell the stories of Americans who served and sacrificed in Vietnam – and, in doing so, will teach visitors about the values upheld by all those who serve in our nation's wars.

The centerpiece will be a Wall of Faces, showcasing pictures of the more than 58,000 Americans whose names are etched on the Vietnam Wall. Visitors to the Wall feel the emotional impact of seeing all those names together, as they walk past row after row of black granite panels with line after line of names. In the center, visitors will have a chance to experience those names individually, learning stories about their lives and seeing how those left behind have chosen to remember their loved ones.

Remembrance is the theme for another Education Center exhibit, one that will display some of the 100,000 items that have been laid at the Wall in tribute over the years. These tokens are often poignant, sometimes unusual and always personal. They, too, give visitors a glimpse into the lives of American servicemembers lost, and how their families have continued on without their loved ones.

Other exhibits will help visitors – especially those too young to remember – learn some of the key dates of the Vietnam War.

Currently, we are preparing to launch a National Call for Photos, in hopes of gathering more than 58,000 pictures – one of every man and woman whose name is etched on the Vietnam Wall. This is obviously a huge undertaking, and we are counting on the help of veterans, their relatives, friends and other interested Americans to help us achieve this goal.

www.vvmfcenter.org

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Jan C. Scruggs is founder and president of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund. He served in Vietnam with the 199th Light Infantry Brigade in 1969 and 1970.

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How to submit a reunion

The American Legion Magazine publishes reunion notices for veterans. Send notices to ***The American Legion Magazine,*** **Attn: Reunions, P.O. Box 1055, Indianapolis, IN 46206,** fax **(317) 630-1280,** e-mail **reunions@legion.org** or submit information via our Web site, **www.legion.org/veterans/reunions.**

Include the branch of service and complete name of the group, no abbreviations, with your request. The listing also should include the reunion dates and city, along with a contact name, telephone number and e-mail address. Listings are publicized free of charge.

Your notice will appear on our Web site within a week and will remain available online until the final day of your reunion. Upon submission, please allow three months for your reunion to be published in print. **Due to the large number of reunions, *The American Legion Magazine* will publish a group's listing only once a year.** Notices should be sent at least six months prior to the reunion to ensure timely publication.

Other notices

"In Search Of" is a means of getting in touch with people from your unit to plan a reunion. **We do not publish listings that seek people for interviews, research purposes, military photos or help in filing a VA claim.** Listings must include the name of the unit from which you seek people, the time period and the location, as well as a contact name, telephone number and e-mail address. Send notices to ***The American Legion Magazine,*** **Attn: "In Search Of," P.O. Box 1055, Indianapolis, IN 46206,** fax **(317) 630-1280** or e-mail **reunions@legion.org.**

The magazine will not publish names of individuals, only the name of the unit. Listings are published free of charge.

Life Membership notices are published for Legionnaires who have been awarded life memberships by their posts. **This does not include a member's own Paid-Up-For-Life membership.** Notices must be submitted on official forms, which may be obtained by sending a self-addressed stamped envelope to ***The American Legion Magazine,*** **Attn: Life Memberships, P.O. Box 1055, Indianapolis, IN 46206.**

"Comrades in Distress" listings must be approved by the Legion's Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation division. If you are seeking to verify an injury received during service, contact your Legion department service officer for information on how to publish a notice.

To respond to a "Comrades in Distress" listing, send a letter to ***The American Legion Magazine,*** **Attn: Comrades in Distress, P.O. Box 1055, Indianapolis, IN 46206.** Include the listing's CID number in your response.

"Taps" notices are published only for Legionnaires who served as department commanders or national officers.

AIR FORCE/ARMY AIR FORCES

20th Ftr Wing, Herndon, VA, 9/24-27, David Skilling, (770) 429-9955, abbyndavid@aol.com; **48th Tact Hosp Sqdn (1959-1965),** San Antonio, 9/24-28, Mike Jones, (301) 898-3836, canambass@aol.com; **91st Strat Recon Wing,** Pigeon Forge, TN, 9/13-16, James Bard Jr., (410) 549-1094, jimbardjr@comcast.net; **377th Sec Police Sqdn (Tan Son Nhut AB, Vietnam),** Tampa, FL, 2/5-8, Jim Stewart, (810) 639-5755, jstewart@centurytel.net; **610th & 618th AC&W Sqdn & 527th AC&W Grp 43rd AD,** Branson, MO, 9/27-30, John Rosso, (661) 832-6036, godfather1501@hotmail.com; **7405th & 7580th Opns Sqd, "Berlin For Lunch Bunch" (Rhein-Main AB, Germany)** Fairborn, OH, 10/2-4, Mike Hushion, (937) 320-1998, mhushion@woh.rr.com; **C-7A Caribou Assn,** Branson, MO, 9/2-6, William Avon, (330) 878-7451; **Webb AFB,** Big Spring, TX, 10/9-11, Jim Little, (432) 264-1999, veteran1@tusco.net

ARMY

3rd Bn 1st Inf, 11th LIB Americal Div (Hawaii & Vietnam, 1966-1969), Atlanta, 10/16-18, Tim Cook, (701) 774-0598, thirdfirstreunion@yahoo.com; **4th Msl Bn 28th Arty,** Cocoa Beach, FL, 10/15-23, Doug Schlumbohm, (321) 266-0137, sindiahoma@bellsouth.net; **39th & 4th AAA Bn,** Nashville, TN, 10/15-19, Norm Van Den Bussche, (847) 543-1811, njvdb2029@sbcglobal.net; **57th AHC,** Colorado Springs, CO, 9/24-27, Jim Mitchell, (360) 575-1761, mitchell7626@comcast.net; **84th Div Tng, 84th Cmte Grp, 84th Tng Grp, 84th Tng Cmd (Milwaukee),** Brookfield, WI, 10/18, Bill Ridgely, (608) 846-2823, bill_ridgely@hotmail.com; **91st Chem Mortar Bn,** Myrtle Beach, SC, 10/1-3, Jean Tutwiler, (304) 496-7264; **428th MPEG Co,** Atlanta, 10/2-3, J.W. Burson, (770) 786-2219, rhburson@gmail.com; **630th Eng LE (Vietnam),** Branson, MO, 9/18-19, Cecil Brown, (731) 415-6460, brownlinda13@aol.com; **709th Maint Bn & 99th CS Bn Inf Div,** Phoenix, 9/16-19, Robert Gregoire, (701) 258-7724; **A Co 982nd Eng Const Bn (Korea),** Hickory, NC, 10/16-17, Jim Elvington, (864) 232-1452; **Echo Co Recon Plt 1/5, 1st Cav Div (1968-1969),** Myrtle Beach, SC, 9/18-20, Ray Satterfield, (184) 327-2610, satterfield@nctv.com

COAST GUARD

CW Operators Assn, Seattle, 9/14-20, Roger Janosek, (214) 755-2032, rjindfw@yahoo.com

MARINES

1st Bn 7th Mar H&S Co (Camp Sukiran, Okinawa, Japan, 1960-1961), Branson, MO, 10/4-8, John T. Ward, (412) 371-3639; **E Co 2/3 3rd Mar Div (1965-1969),** Jacksonville, NC, 9/23-27, Don Hinman, (803) 329-2357, echo2367@comporium.net

NAVY

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TAPS

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Charles Band, Dept. of Mexico. Nat'l & Homeland Sec. Cncl. Vice Chmn. 1990-1994 and Dept. Cmdr. 1992-1994.

Merle F. Brady, Dept. of Ohio. Nat'l Mbrshp. & Post Activ. Cmte. Memb. 1954-1956, Nat'l Veterans Preference Cmte. Memb. 1958-1960, Dept. Cmdr. 1957-1958, Nat'l Exec. Cmte. Alt. Memb. 1958-1960, Nat'l Exec. Cmte. Memb. 1960-1964, Nat'l Foreign Relations Cmsn. Liaison Cmte. Memb. 1960-1962, Nat'l Cmdr. Advisory Cmte. Memb. 1961-1962, Nat'l Economic Cmsn. Liaison Cmte. Memb. 1962-1964, Nat'l Americanism Cncl. Vice Chmn. 1964-1967 and Nat'l Legis. Cncl. Memb. 1989-1990.

Karl W. "Bill" Caswell, Dept. of Alaska. Dept. Cmdr. 1998-1999 and Nat'l Americanism Cncl. Vice Chmn. 2002-2006.

Neal L. Gault Jr., Dept. of Minnesota. Nat'l Vet Planning & Coordinating Cmte. 1990-2008.

Allan Mathison, Dept. of North Dakota. Nat'l Mbrshp. & Post Activ. Cmte. Memb. 1968-1969 and 1975-1976, Nat'l Rehab. Cmte. Advisory Board Memb. 1977-1978 and Dept. Cmdr. 1988-1989.

Anthony J. Minei, Dept. of New York. Nat'l Military Affairs Cmte. Memb. 1968-1980, Nat'l Finance Cmsn. Memb. 1979-1991 and1997-2006, Nat'l Endowment Fund Corp. Memb. 1991-1995 and Nat'l Finance Cmsn. Vice Chmn. 1991-1997.

Forrest "Sonny" Pennison, Dept. of Louisiana. Nat'l Mbrshp. & Post Activ. Cmte. Memb. 1969-1974, Nat'l Counter-Subversive Activ. Cmte. Memb. 1973-1977 and 1978-1980, Dept. Cmdr. 1995-1996 and Nat'l & Homeland Sec. Vice Chmn. 1997-2001.

Ernest E. Rivard, Dept. of Texas. Nat'l Counter-Subversive Activities Cmte. Memb. 1968-1972, Nat'l Distinguished Guests Cmte. Vice Chmn.1976-1978, Nat'l Legis. Cncl. Memb. 1999-2000 and 2001-2009, and Nat'l Cmsn. Children & Youth Consultant 1978-1981.

Norman C. Schlemmer, Dept. of Indiana. Nat'l Military Affairs Cmte. Memb. 1989-1991, Nat'l Military Affairs Cmte. Vice Chmn. 1991-1998, Nat'l Endowment Fund Corp. Director 1991-2005, Nat'l Endowment Fund Corp. Treasurer 1992-2005, Nat'l Endowment Fund Corp. Memb. 1992-2003, Nat'l Legis. Cncl. Memb. 1999-2000 and 2001-2002, Nat'l Endowment Fund Corp. Director Emeritus 2006-2009 and Nat'l Military Affairs Cmte. Chmn. 1998-2001.

Carl J. Weber, Dept. of Pennsylvania. Nat'l Foreign Relations Cncl. Vice Chmn. 1997-1998.

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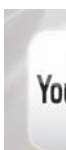
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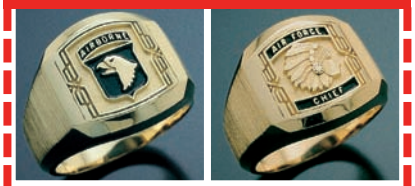

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The novice teed up and smacked the ball straight down the fairway and onto the green, where it stopped inches from the hole.

"Now what?" he asked the speechless pro.

"Uh ... you're supposed to hit the ball into the cup," the pro finally uttered.

"Oh great. Now you tell me!"

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■ Why do you have to "put your two cents in" but it's only a "penny for your thoughts"? Where's that extra penny going to?

■ How is it that we put men on the moon before we figured out it would be a good idea to put wheels on luggage?

■ Why is it that people say they slept "like a baby" when babies wake up every two hours or so?

■ Why do people pay to go up in tall buildings and then put money in binoculars to look at things on the ground?

■ Why do we choose from just two people for president and 50 for Miss America?

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